" Where there is no vision the people perish."

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THE POETRY OF ERNEST DOWSON

AUGUST, 1867—FEBRUARY, 1900.

IN 1900 Arthur Symons wrote: "The death of Ernest Dowson will mean very little to the world at large, but it will mean a great deal to the few people who care passionately for poetry." Now, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, the comparative indifference with which Dowson is regarded and oblivion into which his work has fallen seem to challenge his friend's verdict that he was "a poet, one of the very few writers of our generation to whom that name can be applied in its most intimate sense." A few of his poems—and those not always of his best—have found their way into recent anthologies, and his greatest lyric, *Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae*, is included in *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. On Rupert Brooke his work had some influence, for the "memoir" of that poet remarks that at one period he "entertained a 'culte' for the literature that is now called 'ninetyish'—Pater, Wilde and Dowson." This was a genuine enthusiasm, as anyone may see from his earliest published work, especially the poems written in the alexandrine of *Cynara*, of which the "Day that I loved' is the culmination." That is all—a few poems in anthologies, some stray articles of recognition scattered in various quarterlies and an acknowledged influence on the 'prentice work of a modern poet who died before his art came to maturity.

"He attains contentment finally in the merely passive recognition of superior strength . . . and experiences something of the royal prerogative of poetry to obscure, or at least to attune and soften men's griefs." Pater in this passage is referring to Shakespeare's *King Richard II*, but the words might be taken as descriptive of Dowson. His poems are the record of an unhappy lot; there is none of Henley's stoic defiance of fate, there is hardly a genuine note of revolt and there is never an escape from subjectivity. But beauty there undoubtedly is, beauty none the less magic for being encased in time-worn conventional forms.

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate:

I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses :
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for awhile, then closes
Within a dream.

Such was Dowson's philosophy.

Comparisons are proverbially odious, yet to give to a reader unacquainted with the poet some ideas of his peculiar gift and limitations, it might be permissible to set side by side extracts from two poems on the same theme—the love of a man for a child.

You have loved me, Fair, three lives—or days :
'Twill pass with the passing of my face.
But where *I* go, your face goes too,
To watch lest I play false to you.

I am but, my sweet, your foster-lover,
Knowing well when certain years are over
You vanish from me to another :
Yet I know and love, like the foster-mother.

Thus Francis Thompson in *The Poppy*, a poem whose fame witnesses to its merits. Ernest Dowson's *Ad Domnulam Suam* cannot claim judgment with it as a peer, but it has a very definite charm of its own, and it illustrates of his characteristics both his love of set forms and refrains and the simplicity, sometimes even commonplaceness, of his imagery.

Little lady of my heart !
Just a little longer
I may love thee : we will part
Ere my love grows stronger.

Soon thou leavest fairyland ;
Darker grow thy tresses :
Soon no more of hand in hand :
Soon no more caresses !

Little lady of my heart !
Just a little longer
Be a child : then we will part
Ere this love grows stronger.

Parting has proved a fruitful source of song : the sadness and the unconquerable hope which accompany a farewell have inspired our greatest poets, yet for power to create a definite mood *A Valediction* must surely rank high.

If we must part,
Then let it be like this :
Not heart on heart
Nor with the useless anguish of a kiss :
But touch mine hand and say :
" Until to-morrow or some other day,
If we must part."

Words are so weak
When love hath been so strong :
Let silence speak :
" Life is a little while, and love is long :
A time to sow and reap
And after harvest a long time to sleep,
But words are weak."

With the possible exception of *De Amore*, Dowson's love poetry is all in a minor key. This was inevitable from his experience. All his life he cherished an unrequited passion for the woman whom he addresses in his preface : " I need not write your name for you at least to know that this and all my work is made for you." And when, in the blindness and fury of his fits of drunkenness, other women afforded him brief and treacherous consolation he could only cry

But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
When I awoke and found the dawn was grey :
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara ! in my fashion.

With his love of France, he uses the measures of the old Troubadours and the Courts of Love, and the *Villanelle of His Lady's Treasures* is a beautiful modern example of that

mediæval verse form. The cadences of Swinburne had a great fascination for him, and much of his work is frankly imitative of *Poems and Ballads*. He loses his own individuality entirely in such poems as *Libera Me*, and it may possibly be objected by some that the same is true of *Impenitentia Ultima*, the rhythm of which is reminiscent of his master and the idea of it is contained in *Les Noyades*. Yet *Impenitentia Ultima* must certainly rank as one of his best love poems. The poet, beseeching God to grant him as a boon a last sight of his lady, proclaims :

Her pitiful hands should calm, and her hair stream down and blind me,
Out of the sight of might and out of the reach of fear,
And her eyes should be my light whilst the sun went out behind me
And the viols in her voice be the last sound in mine ear.

Ad Manus Puellae may be mentioned as illustrating an emotion which is surely common, but which has seldom been dealt with by poets—the charm of hands :

I was always a lover of ladies' hands !
Or ever mine heart came here to tryst
For the sake of your carved white hands' commands ;
The tapering fingers, the dainty wrist :
The hands of a girl were what I kissed.

The poetry of the Victorians reflected very clearly their religious opinions : art and morality seemed inseparable (except in Swinburne, who, as Arnold Bennett comments, " never publicly yearned to meet his Pilot face to face ") but that religious thought was in some degree unusual, strong either in its challenge or in its creativeness. Not so Dowson. He was content to accept the teaching of the Catholic church, to partake of her sacraments and to reverence her sanctity, and when he sang of his religion he did so quite simply and naturally. His poem *Extreme Unction* concludes :

Vials of mercy ! Sacring oils !
I know not where nor when I come,
Nor through what wanderings and toils
To crave of you Viaticum.

Yet, when the walls of flesh grow weak,
In such an hour, it well may be,
Through mist and darkness, light will break,
And each anointed sense will see.

Of the monks in *Carthusians* he writes :

From many lands they came, in divers fiery ways :
Each knew at last the vanity of earthly joys,
And one was crowned with thorns, and one was crowned with bays,
And each was tired at last of the world's foolish noise.

" The world's foolish noise " is indeed the ever-recurring burden of his songs, and he must often have echoed his own words in *Nuns of the Perpetual Adoration.*

. . . our roses fade, the world is wild :
But there, beside the altar, there, is rest.

Much of Dowson's work consists of translations from the French. In the recently published *Outline of Literature*, in reference to Verlaine's poetry it is said that " the moment a translation lays a finger on it the whole charm is broken, ' like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh,' " and as an example of this untranslatable quality the following lyric is cited.

Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit,
Si bleu, si calme !
Un arbre, par-dessus le toit,
Berce sa palme.

La cloche dans le ciel qu'on voit
Doucement tinte :
Un oiseau sur l'arbre qu'on voit
Chante sa plainte.

Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, la vie est là,
Simple et tranquille.
Cette paisable rumeur—là
Vient de la ville.

Qu'as-tu fait, ô toi qui voilà
  Pleurant sans cesse.
Dis, qu'as-tu fait, toi qui voilà,
  De ta jeunesse ?

It is, of course, true that no poem can be adequately translated from one language to another. Some of its qualities are bound to be spoilt in the process. Yet it can hardly be said of Dowson's rendering that it is " like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh."

The sky is up above the roof
  So blue, so soft !
A tree there, up above the roof,
  Swayeth aloft.

A bell within that sky we see,
  Chimes low and faint :
A bird upon that tree we see,
  Maketh complaint.

Dear God ! is not the life up there,
  Simple and sweet ?
How peacefully are borne up there
  Sounds of the street !

What hast thou done, who comest here,
  To weep alway ?
Where hast thou laid, who comest here,
  Thy youth away ?

Dowson's three greatest poems are advisedly not printed here. The reader who does not already know them will go to the poet himself for *O Mors ! quam amara est memoria tua nomini pacem habenti in substantiis suis*, in which " surely, the music of silence speaks if it has ever spoken "; for *To One in Bedlam*, where "the poet turns what is sordid into a radiance " ; and, above all, for *Cynara*, where he " has for once said everything and has said it to an intoxicating and perhaps immortal music."

H. ROSS WILLIAMSON.

WALTER DE LA MARE: AN ITALIAN APPRECIATION

WALTER DE LA MARE is the poet of subtle sensations, of refined emotions. We feel that his mind is estranged from reality; he finds himself a stranger in an enchanted land, a guest in a haunted house; he discovers mysterious signs in the shifting arabesques of shadows cast by wind-tossed reeds on the sand, and his soul is lured to quaint and beautiful dreams by the fragrance of unknown flowers. A deep quiet broods over his interior landscape; but there is an oppressive melancholy in this solemn, radiant stillness; it seems as if his peaceful loneliness were often visited by sad thoughts, black and sinister as rooks silently wheeling in the rosy glow of an evening sky. Eerie apparitions hover between the homely lamp and the embroidered curtains; weird Shapes are walking in his dream-palace; the glades of the forest are shimmering with the violet and silvery wings of elves; in the moonlight, the knight Death rides on his pale horse, and, far away, the fantastic Town of Gold sleeps on the shore of the Dead Sea. The twilight shadows have for him a peculiar fascination; in the gathering dusk, in the orchard where lilies raise their ghostly, ethereal blossoms, he feels the presence of invisible Powers; he descries the gleam of wicked eyes peering from the windows of the deserted house on which lies an ancient spell. Then it is that he experiences the anguish of a traveller, who has lost his way in the dark wood and feels himself observed by the green luminous eyes of uncanny beings; then, in the dying light, he perceives more acutely the infinite sadness of beautiful, perishable things, and sees the angel Azrael watching a dreaming girl forlorn or strewing purple flowers on a forgotten grave.

His poetry is essentially symbolic, emblematic images and allegories being his usual means of expression. In *Beware*, a bird sings a mystic warning against the night

which is rapidly drawing near, against Night, the image of Death ; she comes apace bringing with her the Lord of Life, the Giver of Eternity, who is only seen by mortal eyes through the glistening of stars, the fiery dust raised by his invisible feet. A symbol of mystery, the dark *Castle* arises in his dreams, in an unknown land, among cypresses and rose-groves ; a Lethean river, silent and amber-like, flows under the cliffs on which it is perched ; nobody can enter the castle, nobody knows what is in its gloomy rooms ; and it always disappears at dawn. *The Hawthorn* is an emblem of everlasting love ; the perfumes and hues of other blossoms—beauty, splendour, delight—vanish with the passing of Summer ; but, on the grave of sacred affections, the white shrub, wreathed with the incense of its fragrant glory, is waiting for the supreme meeting in Heaven. *The Dwelling* is an allegory of life, in the manner of Poe's *Conqueror Worm*, less grim, but not less melancholy. The green wood—the radiant smile of Nature—surrounds the abode of men ; but the word " Alas " is carved on the door's lintel ; careless like children they sing and play to forget the impending doom ; now and then someone is wanting ; they do not trouble to ask whither he has gone. They go hunting in the forest and do not know that an awful guest rides among them, invisible and soundless. And at last all must pass from the brightly lit hall into the starless night, all must cross the threshold of the door above which is carved the fatal word " Alas."

Music is given a magic power in *The Song of Shadows ;* the musician plays at twilight in the lonely room, and, called by the wizardry of the sad melody, the ghosts of the departed come to their ancient home and linger in the darkening air. In *The Ghost* a vague, and yet deep and thrilling emotion is subtly analysed ; in the silence and peace of night, in the atmosphere still and dark as if the world had vanished away, a sensation of beauty—of a beauty which was once earthly and perishable, but is now blessed and immortal—blooms in the poet's heart, a flower of Eternity. *The Shadow* is a drawing in low tones on a background of blackness ; a dusky face arises from the

gloom, created by the poet's sombre thinking ; the sinister eyes, glimmering as veiled moons, are gazing intently at him ; it is a dream come out of the silence of Hades, an image of mystery and terror.

He knows how to draw real things : children or country folk, and how to evoke the people of fairyland : old kings clad in sumptuous brocades, with magic rings on their withered hands, or witches in their emerald palaces. There is something humorous in his portraiture of queer country types, of the gossips and cronies of the village, and yet his whimsical caricatures are never without a touch of sincere pathos, revealing a heart full of sympathy and pity for the neglected sorrows of humble existences. He gives us simple episodes of everyday life and glimpses of fairyland. He shows a deep sensitiveness to what appears enigmatic in spiritual and material facts, to sudden nostalgic longings, so vague that they cannot be accounted for, to dark omens ; a kind of obscure prescience gives a supernatural character to the simplest events.

The poet reveals a rare insight, a delicate intuition, when dealing with the psychology of children ; he evokes the celestial visions haunting their sleep ; he lives again, with intense vividness, the emotions of childhood. It is not the regret of Wordsworth for the heavenly brightness of infancy gone for ever from the dim old garden of the weary soul, but rather the elation of one who feels it still glowing in his heart. His feelings have the characteristic mobility of a child's, as he passes with easy, quick transition from grief to merriment, from the keen enjoyment of real things to the " reverie " in the world of shadows ; he is still in close sympathy with children's fairyland, glittering with fanciful birds and golden butterflies. Like the artists who have dedicated an important part of their work to children—like Kate Greenaway, Walter Crane, Charles Robinson—he draws and paints his visions with pure, vivid outlines and clear colours.

His subjects taken from everyday life draw a special charm from the new manner of presentment ; laying emphasis on apparently insignificant details, he turns

them into impressive symbols ; he finds in common objects bizarre suggestions, as one who looking on the mirror of a lonely pool is suddenly startled by the reflection of strange visages around his own.

He shows a peculiar liking for the rarest aspects of nature, as for the subtlest stirrings of the soul ; he tries to render those fugitive landscapes, where Spring seems overcast with the pallor of Autumn, where a radiant ghost of Summer glistens on the crystal blossoms of a Winter scene.

His poetic gift is seen at its best in his songs, so musical and so exquisitely sad ; there rings in them the lofty unearthly melancholy of Poe's eerie melodies. He weaves in fantastic garlands the images of popular ballads, and transfers into his elaborate strophes the poignant grace of old airs. He adopted this poetical form as the only one fit to express his subtlest feelings, and he set himself to the difficult task of bestowing on nursery rhymes, on ancient ditties, the glamour of his fantasy, the intensity of passion, gushing from the deepest springs. He concentrated his rich imagery in the small compass of a song, thus adding a new charm to his lines by means of a concise, elliptical style and obtaining a higher intensity of suggestion ; *The Song of the Mad Prince* is one of the finest examples of these " lieder." His verbal music is passionate and subdued as the harmonies of Grieg or Sibelius.

With consummate art he composes these songs full of quaint imagination and pathos ; and each poem calls vividly to the mind a strange mood, a delicate phantom, or a dark presentiment ; yet, in spite of the variety of his subjects and of metrical forms, we derive from his work a unity of impression, as it always happens when the ground from which the various flowers spring is the soul of a true poet. A mystic undercurrent runs throughout his work ; the hymn of Immortality is ringing in his inmost heart, and its echoes reverberate through his lines.

FEDERICO OLIVERO.

University of Turin.

A NEGLECTED MYSTIC: THOMAS TRAHERNE

A happy soul that all the way
To Heaven hath a summer's day.

"A SOUL it is that makes us truly great," exclaimed the mature Traherne in the greatness of his spiritual insight. By his life and his works Traherne fulfilled this dictum. As a child and as a man he despised the trifles, the vanities and gewgaws of the everyday world: by his cheerful and inspiring accounts of his aspirations towards spiritual, not material, ends, he scattered abroad a reflected radiance of the "mystic way" which was opened to himself and very few others.

The political, constitutional, religious and literary upheavals of the centuries darkened the life and works of Thomas Traherne. For nearly three hundred years his manuscripts lay in oblivion until recent research brought to light the literary and religious writings of this great mystic; but, even so, he has not come into his own because of the lack of knowledge concerning his life, his character and the influence which he may have exercised in his own age.

Traherne lived in the time of such men as Milton, Donne, Crashaw, Vaughan and Herbert. But, although these are names to conjure with and to excite attention, Traherne, as great a man as they, is little known. He belonged apparently to the middle class of the Welsh border, for John Aubrey in his *Miscellanies* noted down the parentage and birthplace of one Mr. Traherne, B.D. (Chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgman, Lord Keeper), a learned and sober person" who "was the son of a shoemaker in Hereford." It is possible that Traherne was strongly influenced in his Anglican views by a prominent member of his family—Philip Traherne, who was twice Mayor of Hereford, and whose tombstone recorded his "fervent zeal for the Established Church and clergy, and his friendly and affectionate behaviour in conversation." But John, Philip's brother and father of Thomas Traherne, was not very

flourishing, and this may have led to Traherne's entering college later than usual. Anthony à Wood recorded Traherne's entry as a commoner of Brasenose College in 1652, but whether the student was sixteen years old, the usual age, or eighteen, it is difficult to state without further details. The next account we have of Traherne is to be found in the *Athenae Oxonienses*: "Thomas Traherne, a shoemaker's son of Hereford, was entered a commoner of Brasen-nose College on the first day of March, 1652, took one Degree in Arts, left the House for a time, entered into the sacred function, and in 1661 he was actually created Master of Arts. About that time he became Rector of Credinhill, commonly called Crednell, near to the city of Hereford . . . and in 1669 Bachelor of Divinity." Part of this account is further confirmed by an MS. in the Lambeth Library, which gives the following information of Thomas Traherne, clerk, "admitted 30th December, 1657, by the Commissioners for the Approbation of Public Preachers to the Rectory of Crednell, alias Credenhill, co. Hereford; patron Amabella, Countess Dowager of Kent." Apparently he remained nearly ten years in this living until he was appointed private chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgman, who on August 30th, 1667, became Lord Keeper of the Seals, when the Cabal Ministry took office. It was while Traherne was under the Lord Keeper's patronage that John Aubrey declared he interviewed him in 1671, when he was minister of the parish of Teddington, Middlesex. It was to this parish that Bridgman and Traherne retired when the former was deprived of his office in 1672. The next year Traherne published his *Roman Forgeries*, by which he hoped to confound and disprove the counterfeited inventions—so he regarded them—of the Roman Catholic Church. A year later he was busy with *Christian Ethics*, but, pining after the death of his kindly patron, he died in 1674. The dates of his other works are doubtful: his poems possibly belong to various years; his *Centuries of Meditation* are more mature. But his early death prevented him from concluding the latter or from repolishing the former.

Traherne was so steeped in his spiritual life that investigators fail to learn anything of his actions in his "material" life. Only twice did he make such references: in his *Centuries of Meditation* he spoke of "having been at the University and received there the taste and tincture of another education," and he referred to his "father's poor house." Since, then, he gives no autobiography, and none of his contemporaries can enlighten us, the reflective atmosphere of his work must be resorted to, if we are to know the man. That he was keenly interested in antiquity and history is evidenced by his *Roman Forgeries*, and in literature by his *Poetical Works*, and that he was devoted to the Church and all connected therewith is proved by his life. He gave no biographical details, but he revealed in his poetry and prose his character and personality, his beliefs and principles, and the channel into which he diverted his mystical powers. However little is known of Traherne from external evidence, it is certain from internal sources that he was a good and great man, a mystic and a poet.

II

"I MUST BECOME A CHILD AGAIN."

Traherne in his accounts of his earliest days attracts attention and gives promise of the later development of his character. By relating the impressions of his childhood he put forward a principle which was to be reiterated by a seer of the nineteenth century. Of no man in English literature is it more true to say "Heaven lies about us in our infancy" than of Traherne. This personal knowledge was part of his mystical character, for the flashing remembrances of childhood's feelings and thoughts revealed the mystic's personality and pointed out the way for his development. His aims centred in his yearning cry continually repeated, "I must become a child again," and round that burning desire his character evolved. "The first Impressions are Immortal all," he declared convincingly. This, then, was the reason for his devotion to all that pertains to childhood. He knew personally that the

soul of the child was in touch with the Infinite although it had taken upon it a rose mesh of flesh in the world which was to him the " place of Angels and the Gate of Heaven."

Traherne confessed frankly that the innocence and insight of children are unattainable by book, but he offered to teach them to mankind by experience, and who could be better than he, for truly Adam in Paradise had not more sweet and curious apprehensions of the world than he when he was a child. Then his soul entered into full enjoyment not of the things which the world held in esteem but of the plain unvarnished gifts of God. So it was to be throughout his life. Thus he delighted in :

> New burnished joys !
> Which yellow gold and pearl excel !
> Such sacred treasures are the limbs in boys,
> In which a soul doth dwell :
> Their organised joints and azure veins
> More wealth include than all the world contains.

In this state of heavenly happiness he was in close touch with the living spirit in nature :

> Everything that I did see
> Did with me talk
> And while my God did all his glories show
> I felt a vigour in my sense
> That was all spirit. I within did flow
> With seas of life, like wine ;
> I nothing in the world did know
> But 'twas divine.

In his intoxicating remembrance of these divine circumstances Traherne burst forth in a rush of poetry :

> The streets were paved with golden stones.
> The boys and girls were mine,
> Oh how did their lovely faces shine !
> The sons of men were holy ones,
> In joy and beauty they appeared to me,
> And everything which here I found,
> While like an Angel I did see,
> Adorned the ground.

Harsh, ragged objects, tears, cries, griefs, sins, dissensions, sloth, pain, envy, avarice, fraud and the misery of men were hidden from the eyes of the child who only saw the things "which heavenly spirits and the Angels prize." In his *Centuries of Meditation* he related the same experience as a child :

> All appeared new and strange at first, unexpressibly rare and delightful and beautiful. I was a little stranger, which at my entrance into the world was saluted and surrounded with innumerable joys. My knowledge was Divine. I knew by intuition those things which since my Apostasy, I collected again by the highest reason. My very ignorance was advantageous. I seemed as one brought into the Estate of Innocence. All things were spotless and pure and glorious : yea and infinitely mine, and joyful and precious. I knew not there were any sins or complaints or laws. I dreamed not of poverties, contentions or vices. All tears and quarrels were hidden from mine eyes. Everything was at rest, free and immortal. I knew nothing of sickness or death or rents or exaction, either for tribute or bread. In the absence of these I was entertained like an Angel with the works of God in their splendour and glory, I saw all in the peace of Eden ; Heaven and Earth did sing my Creator's praises, and could not make more melody to Adam than to me. All Time was Eternity, and a perpetual Sabbath. Is it not strange, that an infant should be heir to the whole world, and see those mysteries which the books of the learned never unfold.

Had this "vision splendid" remained with Traherne as he grew older, he would have entered on a still life of contemplation and inaction to the detriment of his character. But the precocious, imaginative and sensitive child was not left alone in his spiritual world. To his intense disgust the customs, manners, and wrong desires of the world gradually enclosed him. Men persuaded him, with difficulty it is true, that the tinselled ware upon a hobby horse was a fine thing, a ribbon and a feather curious. He began to prize a drum, a fine coat, a penny, a gilded book ; but the heavens, the sun and stars disappeared and were no more to him than the bare walls. So amidst the vanities of the world the child was corrupted by devices, and lived among dreams and shadows like a prodigal son feeding upon husks with swine. But it was this exile

which was necessary for that development of character which was essential for the awakening of the mysticism which was lying in abeyance within Traherne's soul. To the child of quick imagination and mystical tendencies, who, when the Bible was being read, saw the light and splendour of dead ages, would come swift flashes from the spiritual life of his infancy, and there would grow within him the determination to "unlearn and become, as it were, a little child again" that he might enter into the Kingdom of God. Traherne acknowledged this later in *The Approach*, when speaking of the insight which had become his and which had enabled him to see God's ways :

> These thoughts His Goodness long before
> Prepared as precious and Celestial store,
> With curious art in me inlaid,
> That Childhood might itself alone be said
> My Tutor, Teacher, Guide to be,
> Instructed then even by the Deity.

Traherne was happy by nature. He lived on the sunlit heights, and, if at times he saw the gloom of the valleys and became uneasy, he steadfastly turned his eyes back to the sunshine and refused to brood over the darker aspects of life. The earth was given to him for his enjoyment, therefore, why grieve, he asked ? To him the world was the Gate of Heaven through which he saw Infinity stretching to Infinity. This was his delight he said :

> So it is my admiration and joy that while so many thousands wander in Darkness, I am in the Light, and that while so many dote upon false treasures and pierce themselves through with many sorrows, I live in peace, and enjoy the delights of God and Heaven.

Fortified by the spirit of Truth, Traherne's belief was "No reproaches can discomfort me, no enemies can hurt me." He was, indeed, one of those rare but happy natures whose essence it is to love, to admire, to adore passionately, and in turn to be loved. He knew this himself, for he said in *Nature :*

> I was by nature prone and apt to love
> All Light and Beauty, both in heaven above

And Earth beneath, prone even to admire,
Adore and praise as well as to Desire.
My Inclinations rais'd me up on high,
And guided me to all Infinity.

In his knowledge he asserted boldly that

Men's bodies were not made for stripes,
Nor anything but Joys.
They were not made to be alone :
But made to be the very throne
Of Blessedness, to be like suns, whose rays
Dispersed, scatter many thousand ways.

This growing desire to retain possession of his joy roused the fighting spirit in him to destroy sin :

Sin ! wilt thou vanquish me !
And shall I yield the victory ?
Shall all my joys be spoiled,
And pleasures soiled,
By thee !

and he was able to maintain :

Contentment is a sleepy thing !
If it in Death alone must die,
A quiet Mind is worse than Poverty,
Unless it from Enjoyment spring !

That's Blessedness alone that makes a king
Wherein the Joys and Treasures are so great,
They all the powers of the soul employ,
And fill it with a work compleat.

Traherne was contented but his mysticism, so closely allied with his character, prevented him from yielding to a deadly quiet of mind in spiritual matters.

Traherne so appreciated the simple treasures of childhood which the grown-up man despised that he marvelled that men should regard mean objects while they scorned the glories of creation. " Would one think it possible," he asked, " for a man to delight in gauderies like a butterfly, and neglect the Heavens ? Did we not see it daily it would

be incredible. They rejoice in a piece of gold more than in the Sun and get a few little glittering stones and call them jewels. And admire them because they be resplendent like the stars and transparent like the air, and pellucid like the sea. But the stars themselves, which are ten thousand times more useful, great and glorious, they disregard." Thus it was that the mystic fulfilled his desire to become a child again, for with childlike wisdom and faith he put his trust in real treasures : the air was better to him as it was —a living miracle—than filled with crowns and sceptres, and mountains were better than solid diamonds. Small wonder is it that such a soul, always listening, trembling and awestruck, for the notes of spiritual music, forsook worldly prosperity for higher aspirations. But he will give his own account :

When I came into the country, and being seated among silent trees, and meads and hills, had all the time in my own hands, I resolved to spend it all, whatever it cost me, in the search of happiness, and to satiate that burning thirst which Nature had enkindled in me from my youth. In which I was so resolute, that I chose rather to live upon £10 a year, and to go in leather clothes, and feed upon bread and water, so that I might have all my time clearly to myself, than to keep many thousands per annum in an estate of life where my time would be devoured in care and labour.

" Oh let me leave Kings' Courts to come unto Thee," he cried, " I choose rather in a cave to serve Thee than on a throne to despise Thee " ; for he wisely saw that " The way to become rich and blessed was not by heaping accidental and devised riches to make ourselves great in the vulgar manner, but to approach more near, or to see more clearly with the eye of our understanding, the beauties and glories of the whole world ; and to have communion with the Deity in the riches of God and Nature." Therefore, he concluded, philosophically, " This estate wherein I am placed is the best for me, though encompassed with difficulties. . . Riches are but tarnished and gilded vanities, honours are but airy and empty bubbles, affections are but winds, perhaps too great for such a ship as mine, of too light a ballast ; pleasures yea, all these are but witches that draw and steal us away from God ; dangerous allurements, counterfeit realities, horrid poison, cumbersome distractions. *I have found them so.*" Truly to Traherne this world was a place " where people dream, and loiter, and wander, and disquiet themselves in vain to

make a vain show; but do not profit because they prize not the blessings they have received."

Nevertheless, with all the generosity of a great man Traherne could not keep hidden the secret of his happiness; in his sincerity and love of creation he must tell his fellow-men of his pleasures, and warn them with convincing ardour

> You never enjoy the world aright, till the Sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heirs as well as you. Till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, as mysers do in gold, and kings in sceptres, you never enjoy the world. Till your spirit filleth the whole world, and the stars are your jewels . . . till you love men so as to desire their happiness with a thirst equal to the zeal of your own; till you delight in God for being good to all, you never enjoy the world.

The latter part of this quotation definitely proves that although the mystic in Traherne enticed him to narrow himself to the spiritual life alone—for to him spiritual things were the greatest and spiritual strength the most excellent—and although his soul burned with his love for God, his character was such that he stood open-armed in his love for humanity. He did not selfishly consider only the relationship of himself with God but of God with mankind. He was urged throughout by the desire to aid men that "all men should be as happy as he." His *Centuries of Meditation* and his *Christian Ethics* were most probably written for this purpose: to enlighten men and guide them to the true way to happiness.

Traherne was an idealist, but at the same time he was practical in his knowledge of men and the world: thus while he stated his ideals, with true philosophy he did not turn his back on those men who failed to achieve but described his own experience in all humility. He comforted and encouraged the weary-hearted strugglers by saying, "The most tempestuous weather is the best seeding time," while he warned all individuals that "Souls to souls are like apples, one being rotten rots another," and that their

bodies were given to be a lantern only to the candle of Love which shines in the soul. His advice was healthily and beautifully wise :

You must have glorious Principles implanted in your nature ; a clear eye able to see afar off, a great and generous heart apt to enjoy at any distance ; a good and liberal soul prone to delight in the felicity of all, and an infinite delight to be their Treasure : neither is it any prejudice to you that this is required, for there is a great difference between a Worm and a Cherubim. And it more concerneth you to be an Illustrious Creature than to have the possession of the whole world—

and mindful of himself he urged the dreamers of great ideals :

Let this therefore be the first principle of your soul—That to have no principles or to live beside them, is equally miserable. And that philosophers are not those that speak but do great things.

Traherne was but doing that which Blake did later, trying to raise mankind from the slough of material things to the rock of spiritual strength to which he had attained :

I give you the end of a golden string,
Only wind it into a ball,
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate
Built in Jerusalem's wall. (Blake.)

In his instinctive knowledge of human nature, he, worldly wise, appealed to the feeling which binds the better parts of all beings together in some degree or other :

Without love all is discord and confusion. All blessings come upon us by Love, and by Love alone all delights and blessings are enjoyed. All happiness is established by Love, and by Love alone is glory attained. God knoweth that Love uniteth Souls, maketh men of one heart in a house, fills them with liberality and kindness to each other, makes them delightful in presence, faithful in absence, tender of the honour and welfare of the beloved, apt to obey, ready to please, constant in trials, patient in sufferings, courageous in assaults, prudent in difficulties, victorious and triumphant. All that I shall need to observe further is that it completed the Joys of Heaven. Well therefore may wisdom desire Love, well may the

Goodness of God delight in Love. It is the Sun and Glory of His Eternal Kingdom.

Traherne was indeed a saintly man who knew, and lived up to the knowledge, that Love is the supreme duty and good; that love is wisdom, purity, valour, and peace, and that its infinite sorrow is infinitely better than the world's richest joy. But the mystic's own definition of "Magnanimity" will best serve to sum up the attributes of his character:

It includes all that belongs to a great soul; a high and mighty courage, an invincible Patience and Immoveable Grandeur which is above the reach of injuries, a contempt of all little and feeble enjoyments, and a certain kind of Majesty that is conversant with great things, a high and lofty frame of spirit, allied with the sweetness of courtesy and respect; a deep and stable resolution founded on humility without any baseness; an infinite hope and a vast desire; a Divine, profound, uncontrollable, sense of one's own capacity; a generous confidence, and a great inclination to heroical deeds; all these conspire to complete it, with a severe and mighty expectation of bliss incomprehensible—all the world is but a little bubble; Infinity and Eternity the only great and sovereign things wherewith it converseth. Nothing is great if compared to a Magnanimous Soul but the Sovereign Lord of all Worlds. . . . He knows that all the world lies in wickedness, and admires not at all that things palpable and near and natural, are unseen, though most powerful and glorious, because men are blind and stupid. He pities poor vicious kings that are oppressed with heavy crowns of vanity and gold, and admires how they can content themselves with such narrow territories: yet delights in their regiment of the world, and pays them the honour that is due unto them.

The slight glimpses of Traherne's character as revealed in his works bear witness to the fact that he was above all things magnanimous, and this is substantiated by the glowing tribute of an unknown friend who thus described him:

He was a Divine of the Church of England, of a very comprehensive soul and very acute Parts, so fully bent upon that Honourable Function in which he was engaged and so wonderfully transported with the Love of God to Mankind, with the excellency of those

Divine Laws which are prescribed to us. . . He was a man of a cheerful and sprightly temper, free from anything of the sourness or formality by which some great pretenders to Piety rather disparage and misrepresent true Religion than recommend it: and therefore was very affable and pleasant in his conversation, ready to do all good offices to his Friends, and charitable to the Poor almost beyond his ability. But being removed out of the country to the service of the late Lord Keeper Bridgman as his Chaplain, he died young and got early to those blissful mansions to which he at all times aspired.—(To the Reader by his Friend—in *A Serious and Pathetical Contemplation of the Mercies of God*, published by Rev. Dr. Hickes.)

A. DORIS L. WILSON.

(*To be concluded.*)

ASPIRATION

I WILL drink deep of all the glories of the world!
The wayside flowers, scents born of April showers,
The call of the moor, the challenge of the sea,
The grasp of a friend, and plighted love that knows no end,
The Mystic Meal, the angels' ministry—all mine may be!
I will drink deep of all the glories of the world!
So, it may be, when these things pass from me,
Because I loved these wonders of Thy grace,
Then, when I die—albeit no other claim have I—
I may behold the glory of Thy Face, My God, Thy Face!

HILDA DRABBLE.

DISCONTENT

THE wise men say 'tis childish
To cry for the moon.
The wise men tell me so,
And I am but a child,
They know
The moon comes not for crying.
I'll whisper you what I think;
The wise must not hear.
I think I'd rather cry
Lifelong in vain for moons,
Than die
In perfectest contentment.

N. J. KESSLER.

HAD BYRON A MUSICAL EAR?

NO little piece of what once was Byron, or of his literary remains, escaped the scribes of his centenary. From the setting of his not irreproachable nose to the last worst drop of his torrential stream of verse, the man and his works have been subjected to an unfriendly and unworthy process of dissection. The nation which produced a great poet has seemed to delight in traducing his memory and belittling his poems. One of our most distinguished literary men has even gone the amazing length of denying a musical sense to continental nations because they rate Byron higher than he does!

And the scandals! Only my respect for some of the commentators prevents me from writing:

> Ye modern scribes who write of Byron dead;
> Who, after a hundred years, defame his verse!
> 'Tis true that many of ye have written worse,
> But how few of ye a better life have led!

If I do not write these lines, it is because they would be as unfair as some of the attacks on the dead, and because I have no doubt that some of our lives could be exposed completely without the blushes which once mantled on *The Spectator's* cheek at the mere thought of Byron. But I feel compelled to add, in an age when so many men young enough to know better publish as novels fanciful accounts of their own bleeding hearts, and when women are devoured alive for literary pastime and profit, that it is a little odd to see quite so many references to the fact that Byron also was a sinner.

My purpose here is to avoid scandals, new and old, and to deal solely with one aspect of the criticisms of Byron's poetry.

I see that Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch repeats and embroiders the reflection made by Swinburne and others upon Byron's ear for rhythm and the music of poetry. Swinburne it was who had the temerity to tell us that Byron's "smooth cadences are often vulgar and facile," thus writing words which truly describe no inconsiderable proportion of his own "harmonious verbality."

Shall we turn to our Swinburne (to a poem chosen for an anthology by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch himself) :—

> More fair than strange fruit is
> Of faiths ye espouse ;
> In me only the root is
> That blooms in your boughs ;
> Behold now your God that ye made you, to feed him
> with faith of your vows.

You shall search Byron in vain to find anything as senseless, as childishly and falsely jingling, as that.

"Q" goes further than Swinburne, and tells us that one bad reason why the foreigner tolerates Byron is that the poet was unmusical and "the foreigner has an equally defective ear." So the continental nations are denied the love and knowledge of music because they love Byron! Goethe (do you remember, O blushing ones, how he hammered out hexameters on a lady's back ?), we must understand, came of an unmusical people, with no ear to detect the lack of melody in Byronic verse. Equally the nation which invented the sonnet, and the *ottava rima* of *Don Juan*, has no ear to detect metrical monstrosities !

We are told that Byron is "cheap and vulgar." The truth is that he wrote too much, and that he knew it. It is not necessary to defend the whole of the enormous product of those few short years, for we may be quite sure that Byron himself, if he had lived for a decade after Missolonghi, would have been glad to destroy much of it. It is also true that amidst the incredible quantity of verse which he composed there is more than enough to vindicate him from the special charge of musical and metrical infelicity.

"Q" tells us that Shelley showed a better way. I may be permitted to love my Shelley and yet to resent his use as a stick with which to beat Byron. Shelley wrote comparatively little, but if his verse were treated like Byron's we could name many a line of defective music. Take the too familiar

> Hail to thee, blithe spirit !
> Bird thou never wert,
> That from Heaven, or near it,
> Pourest thy full heart
> In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

As a child, I could never like the ugly and false rhyming of "wert" and "heart," and the dragging in of the almost comical "near it" as a false rhyme to "spirit." Byron invented plenty of such rhymes, but for comical situations. And then the "profuse strains," with its doubtful value as description and its three sibilants! The next stanza concludes:

And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

That line ought to be put before children, not to learn, as is always done, but as an example of what to avoid. Who will find me any serious line of Byron's as unintentionally ugly and unmusical? (I say unintentionally with peculiar intention, for I am one of those who claim that discord and harshness have their place in poetry as in music.) But Shelley was often in trouble with the letter S, and the fact betrays that his ear lacked delicacy.

I find no internal evidence, always considering the volume and speed of output, that Byron lacked a musical ear. Indeed, I do not know how his extraordinary facility in rhyming is to be reconciled with the view of Quiller-Couch. Byron had no rhyming dictionary, but he was never at a loss for a good and proper verse-ending, and was never, therefore, driven to such a device as "near it" merely because he had already written "spirit." We know that he rhymed "pukes in" to "Euxine," but not in a serious couplet.

I should like respectfully to set a problem for those who assert that Byron had no "ear." Given a man with a poor sense of metre and melody, how account for his writing *Don Juan*, the sixteen cantos of which contain 1,959 stanzas (or thereabouts; I refuse to add 'em up twice) of the sufficiently difficult *ottava rima*, without one single instance in which sound dictates sense, and including hundreds of stanzas as beautiful and as musical as:

Thus lived—thus died she; never more on her
  Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not made
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear,
  Which colder hearts endure till they are laid
By age in earth; her days and pleasures were
  Brief but delightful—such as had not stay'd

Long with her destiny ; but she sleeps well
By the sea-shore whereon she loved to dwell.

There is more true music in *Don Juan* alone than in all the jingles Swinburne ever wrote.

Or take the oft-quoted conclusion of *Childe Harold*, beginning :—

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll !
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain ;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore ;—upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

At the least, it is perfect music, with never a fault of metre or strained or imperfect rhyme in eight lovely stanzas. What perversity is it that makes us deny, and cry shame upon, so great a possession ? It was the ringing music of Byron which caught my fancy when I was a child, and led me to make my first attempt to rhyme. Now that I am old I am told that there is no music where I found song. I will not believe it.

LEO CHIOZZA MONEY.

[Like our contributor, we first fell in love with poetry under the spells of *Childe Harold*, and we quite vehemently asseverate his main contention, which we cannot regard, however, as strengthened by his warlike *Vos quoque*. We think it a great pity to regard any technique of prosody or verbal music as sacrosanct. There are no rules that a moment of genius may not shatter. We do not dislike his line from Shelley : from Master Skelton's " It semyth the sobbyng of an old sow " to Miss Ruth Bassett's " The sinister, sad surging of the sea," the principal consonant of the word *susurrus* has never failed of its own onomatopœic significances. The educated have a responsibility in the expression of their personal tastes : there is always the danger that a scholar's fad may become the empiricism of a myriad half-scholars. Sir Leo goes to war to end war. It never works. Similarly, while we heartily welcome his protest against the vogue and hypocrisy of literary " personalities " which degrades research into prying, we cannot agree with his remarks on " false " rhymes—but this our readers already know.—PREM. ED., POETRY REVIEW.]

A CHRISTMAS SONNET

NOT unto that great feast that Christ ordained
In memory of his mysterious sacrifice
Of crucifixion : but, having before our eyes
The Star of Bethlehem—like the kings, who reigned
In three far countries, and as one constrained,
To pilgrimage—so we this morning rise
And gather in spirit where the Godhead lies
Low in a manger, humbly entertained.

Stretch forth, you Baby, stretch your little hands,
(Accepting gifts we offer, though nothing worth),
Hands small, yet full of riches, over the earth ;
Laugh with your laughing worshippers in all lands ;
Give joy wherewith to adore you ; and teach us how
To spread that joy, that all may adore you now.

J. W. G. HEAVEN.

OTMOOR

IF there be spirits yet who prowl
By slow and solitary streams,
Or elves with humid hair, that play
Under the trees upon the clay,
Or faded ghosts, or dim-eyed dreams,
Or witch who calls the famished owl
Under the pale moon's waning beams,
And dances with the Fay;

Here is a haunt for them, where lie
Damp meadows in a sunken plain
Full of a shrouded quietness ;
Still brooks of weeds and water-cress.
And many a wild and rutted lane,
Grown hard beneath a summer sky
Or sodden with the winter rain,
Miry and flowerless.

The unkempt hedge is left to sprout
Tangled and tall, and every way

Are clustering tree-tops far and wide,
And willows by the water-side
Dipping a green and supple spray
Where glittering flies dance in and out,
And on the surface, golden-gay,
The water-lilies ride.

Not very bright—not very fair,
Nor is the scene so wholly wild
As other refuges may be,
Yet has a sober privacy,
Cool, covert places, and a mild
Charmed beauty when the sun is there,
And when I was a little child
It had a mystery.

Down in the lanes, beyond a stack
Of hay, where tufted rushes stand,
And where the tall, coarse grasses grow,
Half-buried in the clay below
Is one huge stone in the netherland
Alone, upon a long wide track;
Heaved thither by some doughty hand
That laboured long ago.

Gnarled like a log of knotted wood,
Padded with velvet moss, to me,
In my young heart's imagining,
It was a strange and reverend thing,
A magic power that seemed to be
The centre of the neighbourhood,
Where shapes that lurk in pond and tree
Gathered upon the wing.

And still towards it seemed to yearn
The genii living in the ground,
And they who shake their wings unseen
In the seclusion of the green
Cloister, and they whose hair is found
In stagnant pools; I could discern

A magic sighing all around
For things that once had been.

For loitering there sometimes I dreamed
Of sages kneeling round the stone,
And silver-vested pagan priests;
Of tribesmen at their altar-feasts,
Of praying warriors lying prone
Before it when the moonlight gleamed
On it, and of the dying moan
Of sacrificial beasts.

But all these ghosts have passed away,
Only the sweating horses tread
The rushes, bringing home the wain,
And in the fields and in the lane
There are no sprites, but snakes instead
Basking upon the turf all day.
And the Sun, glaring overhead,
Parches the drowsy plain.

It softens and it darkens; now
The wild-duck startled from her nest
Soars up, shy bird, with all her powers;
With yelping cough the vixen scours
The grass, upon her bloody quest;
In some far field a single cow
Heaves her full flanks, and will not rest
From bellowing hours on hours.

To-morrow in that sunken floor,
When the tall grass is wet and chill,
At dawn the low-strewn mists will spread.
Then comes the farmer with bare head
Down from the village on the hill,
Then shivering tramps from cow-house door
Set off again, or linger still
To chew their musty bread.

For they have snored in sleep all night
With no wild fancies of their own,
Where I in waking dreams have lain
Long hours upon the turf, and fain,
When all the fields are newly mown,
Rapt at the touch of every sprite,
Would sit upon that ancient stone
And be a child again.

W. H. COATES.

AT VESPERS

NIGHT falls as drops a petal from the rose.
The valley dreams her dream of amethyst
And silver light enmeshed in vagrant mist.
Hushed is each whispering wind as day's eyes close.
The stars across night's shaded breast repose,
A string of pearls by cloud embroideries kissed;
And nodding grass-tops with the dew keep tryst.
The mill-pond like a smoky opal glows.
Faint from the forest fringe a late bird calls,
A lonely watchman in the verdurous gloom,
Threading the silence with a haunting note
That on the meadow's dew-drenched bosom falls,
Where firefly lanterns counterfeit the moon,
And pale night-moths like fairy galleons float.

R. R. GREENWOOD.

LOVE

WHAT do I care for kisses?
I kissed your heart as it bled,
And in my life is woven
That glowing crimson thread.
I have moments to remember
Till my last set of sun,
And love that will be living
After time is done.

MOIRA SETON.

"WHEN I AM DEAD"

I.

LET a few daisies star my head
When I am dead,
I shall not wear
The wreath I coveted.
Let it be said upon the stone
Where I am laid
That one lies there
Who longed for fame
But died unknown,
For men to come
A common name
Upon a tomb.

II.

Weep not for me when I am dead,
Twine orange-blossoms in my hair
And on the tomb where I am laid
Let it be said that I was fair
And went to that dark room a maid,
To sleep with death till doomsday there.

HELEN REEDLEY.

III.

Grant me but this ;
When I am dead,
The stifling coffin wall I dread,
And naught of bell or candle take
In sad procession for my sake.
Nay,
What is left of me
On some green hill-side lay,
Nor blossoms strew, nor flower
That laughs to joyous day.
Give but one red, red rose,
For Love's remembered hour ;
And in the silence leave me so,
With none to hear the morning lark
His requiem bring.

Thrice happy dust !
Never to know

The mouldering tomb, the iron bars ;
But through the dark
At twilight close
To blow with Beauty to the stars.

S. M. GOODE.

THOUGH THE SNOW FALLS

HE worked in this room,
And here he died—
His dreaming done,
And his eyes as wide
As the frost-fired spaces
Outside.

There's more of him here
At rest in this room
Than ever they dropped
Into the gloom
Of the churchyard, under
The snow's bloom.

Whether he journeys
On, or keeps
The unbroken vigil
Of wintry steeps,
Here he loved and he laboured,
And here he sleeps.

And whoever comes
To dwell where he dwelt,
To work where he worked,
To kneel as he knelt
At the lonelier altars
Of beauty, deep felt—

And however Time
Scrabbles and scrawls,
Untiring, its name
On these vanishing walls,
This place will always be his,
Though the snow falls and falls.

CYRIL G. TAYLOR.

THE DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY—VII

MARY SINTON LEITCH, DAVID MORTON, ELIZABETH SHAW MONTGOMERY, BENJAMIN COLLINS WOODBURY

WHEN a poet receives a hearty reception from the leading reviewers on her first book, and is praised as being original, full of imagination, feeling and concrete visualisation, as Mary Sinton Leitch has been by such poets and critics as John Hall Wheelock, William Lyon Phelps, Robert S. Hillier and William S. Braithwaite, one is interested in knowing what she herself thinks of her own poems and which she prefers.

Her letter will be welcomed by those who have read her volume, *The Wagon and the Star* (B. J. Brimmer Co.). Like other poets she commends the idea of having poets state which poems they like best ; as follows :

I think it very interesting indeed to have the poets give us their own favourites among their poems, and I shall refer to their lists in The Poetry Review hereafter when I read the books reviewed therein by their authors. It is difficult for me to say which of my poems I prefer, for the reason that the one that is far and away my favourite *is the one I am going to write !* Next to that one I believe I should put *On being Told That My Child Resembles Me, To My Mother, The Winter Woods, One Rose, Sailing Ship Days, Why are the Dead not Dead?* as being perhaps the best of my shorter poems. I suppose I must also include *The Poet*, though I am a little jealous of it, as it has been much more often quoted and included in more anthologies than anything else I have published, and I do not think it is the best thing I have done. Of the longer poems in *My Waggon*, I think I like best *The Victory of the Woods*—perhaps, because it is the record of an actual experience, though I know that is not an artistic *raison d'être* for my partiality.

The name of the book is based on Emerson's *Hitch Your Wagon to a Star*, which moves Mrs. Leitch to write the following introductory lines :

'Twas fine for Emerson to say
Inspiring things, I know,
But stars are, oh, so far away,
And waggons very slow.

Mine rumbles clumsily along
On earth, altho' afar
'Tis held by silver ropes of song
Firmly to a star.

Well may the author be jealous of *The Poet*, which opens the book as a proem. We cannot pass it by:

In the darkness he sings of the dawning,
In the desert he sings of a rose,
Or of limpid and laughing water
That thro' green meadows flows.

He flings a Romany ballad
Out thro' his prison bars
And, deaf, he sings of nightingales
Or, blind, he sings of stars.

And hopeless and old and forsaken,
At last with failing breath
A song of faith and youth and love
He sings at the gates of death.

Mrs. Leitch's depth of thought and skill in treating subjects that might easily be made purely personal and uninteresting to strange ears are revealed in her first selection, *On Being Told That My Child Resembles Me:*

I would not have you of my fashioning
Sweet child—not yours these hands that spill the wine
Life proffers! you, with steadier grasp than mine,
Shall lift the chalice high;
Shall drink and, drinking, sing
The song that on my lips would never reach the sky!

Not yours these faltering feet, these straining eyes
That cannot see the stars for mists of earth!
Oh, naught have I to give you of my dearth!
For your clear gaze shall see
Beauty thro' all disguise,
And winged shall be your feet like those of Mercury!

Yet for your voice of sweetness and of power
My voice shall set the key; my candle-light
Shall fire your torch to flame thro' all the night.

Be, dear one—if you must
Be aught of me—the flower
Of all my aspirations, blossoming from their dust!

David Morton prefers to have us select the best from his books *Ships in Harbor* and *Harvest* (G. P. Putnam), both replete with exquisite sonnets. The sonnet *Ships in Harbor*, from which the first volume derives its name, and *Old Ships*, *Summer*, and *Immortalis* are my selections in the first volume. *Ships in Harbor* and *Immortalis* follow:

I have not known a quieter thing than ships,
  Nor any dreamers steeped in dream as these,
  For all that they have tracked disastrous seas,
And winds that left their sails in flagging strips;
Nothing disturbs them now, no stormy grips
  That once had hurt their sides, no crash or swell,
  Now can the fretful harbor quite dispel
This quiet that they learned on lonely trips.

They have no part in all the noisy noons;
  They are become as dreams of ship that go
  Back to the secret waters that they know,
Each as she will to unforgot lagoons,
Where nothing moves except the ghostly spars
  That mark the patient watches on the stars.

* * *

All loved and lovely women, dear to rhyme:
  Thaïs, Cassandra, Helen and their fames,
  Burn like tall candles through forgotten time,
Lighting the Past's dim arras with their names.
Around their faces wars the eager dark,
  Wherein all other lights are sunken now;
  Yet, casting back, the seeker still may mark
A flame of hair, a bright, immortal brow.

Surely, where they have passed, one after one,
  Wearing their radiance to the darkened room,
Surely, new-comers to Oblivion
  May still descry, in that all-quenching gloom,
Rare faces, lovely, lifted and alight,
  Like tapers burning through the windy night.

In the *Scarlet Runner* (T. G. Crowell) Elizabeth Shaw Montgomery presents a collection of sixty-six poems. She tells me :—

In a certain section of Connecticut, after a mile's walk through hemlocks, there is a hill upon whose summit stands a tiny house. It is here that I do my work and dream my dreams. Since the house was built a year and a half ago, I have written many poems to this lovely spot. I have included six of these in my book, *Scarlet Runner*, under the title *Sonnet Sequence*, and of these six the final one is my favourite. May I quote it ? :—

I AM BESIEGED BY DOUBTS.

Frail passing hour, tired leaves that idly fall,
Warm earth upon whose tender breast I lie—
Do you not hear, do you not even try
To understand the voice of winds that call,
The thousand thoughts that as a leaden pall
Do ever lie upon my heart and cry
For utterance ? Why have we paid, the sigh
Of death that drifts to dust perpetual ?

All men demand a faith, a permanence
That shall outlive the stars. Faith weaves the cord
That leads to Deity. Ah, hill of mine,
When I am gone, in fresh magnificence
Each spring your life will bloom. Give me a word
To still my futile questioning, a sign.

My publisher asked me why I closed the book with a question couched in such a sad strain, but I am my truest self when I am in this mood, and this sonnet comes from my very soul. I have always bought The Poetry Review and always enjoyed it, but now it is so much more dear to me because of its American section. I congratulate you on your splendid achievement.

To the poet's selection I am tempted to add *Dream Song* :

I ask that sleep may come to you to-night,
As quietly as the meeting of the dawn
And purple hills, or as the moon
Ascends the ladder of the sky ;

I ask that drowsy, ragged poppies everywhere
Shall blow their breath upon your mouth
Until you smile and sleep;
And that the distant singing of the waves
Shall beat in harmonies upon the shores of time
That chant now high, now low, and very soft
Your lullaby;
That love with curved lips shall brush
Your eyelids tired
Until they droop to rest;
And you shall sleep to-night, dear heart,
And you shall sleep.

"My poetry has been to me a door," quotes Benjamin Collins Woodbury from *John Still* in *Portsmouth and Other Poems* (G. H. Ellis and Co.). Petrarchan sonnets are Mr. Woodbury's favorite form for poetic expression, as he explains in the accompanying letter:—

I have been very greatly interested in your plan for reviewing poetry in the American section, and THE POETRY REVIEW is certainly most generous in granting so much valued space to this feature. I feel that you are rendering a generous service to the cause of American poetry.

In answering your request for an opinion regarding my own work, I may say first of all that the sonnet form has interested me in that it serves as a ready means for the limitation of a certain discursiveness which many of us are prone to indulge in, often to the peril of clarity of form and elegance of expression.

I soon found that there was seldom any subject which could be treated emotionally that could not be succinctly dealt with within the limits of the sonnet form. In other words, if I had anything to say I could say it in this space if it were a subject coming within the range of the Sonnets' fourteen lines.

It may interest you to know that the first form I learned to use was that employed in the sonnet *The Olympic Host.* This was modelled after the form so well handled by Thomas Bailey Aldrich in his inimitable manner. I believe, by the way, that the Petrarchan form with the two rhymes in the sestet is what I have most often used.

Your request for poets to analyse their own poems is, I think, unique and original. In going over the little volume of *War Sonnets* I find that seventeen of them are written in the pure Italian form with two alternating rhymes in the sestet.

You ask what poems most appeal to me. If I were to choose any individual ones I think I should select *Reims*, *Rupert Brooke* and *The Coming Race*.

In a way the purely intellectual sonnet or the purely emotional sonnet makes less appeal to me than the æsthetic sonnet which combines both the intellectual and the emotional. That is why, perhaps, I like best of all *Reims* and *The Coming Race*, which I feel necessitated on my part a combination of study and reflection.

Coming to *Portsmouth and Other Poems*, I suppose my preference, so far as the sonnets are concerned, are *Tercentenary*, which, it may interest you to know, was not a little admired and praised by those who saw it printed as a prologue to the text of the *Pageant of Portsmouth*, which was written and directed by Virginia Tanner.

Then I suppose I particularly like *East India Trade*, *The Sandpiper*, *Candle-Light Service*, *Processional*, *April*, *The Violet*, *Pilgrims* and *Tut-Ankh-Amen*. If I were to apply the same analysis to these sonnets I should say that *The Violet* and *Tut-Ankh-Amen* are my preference. I go back to them more often than to any others, except perhaps the sestet in *Memorials*. I like that perhaps because I made bold to end it with an imperfectly metrical line.

Portsmouth has, I think, called forth more attention than any other poem. I personally like particularly the friendly familiarity (speaking poetically) to be found in *To Thomas Neil*. I also like the two lyrics, *The Sun Dial* and *The Ghosts of Song*. The little couplets introductory to *Portsmouth* have also called forth much favorable mention.

I realise that a young poet (from the reviewer's standpoint) is open to all sorts of criticism. His very daring might, if not so tragic at times, seem perhaps his best atrribute. Finally, I may say that poetry has been to me not so much a passion as a pleasure and pastime.

I quote *The Coming Race* from *War Sonnets* :—

> What promise hath the future for the race,
> What balm to soothe the troubles of this age?
> Will history but turn another page
> Red-hued, which time alone can scarce erase ?
> Or will the patient years the scars efface,
> The child of earth attain his heritage,
> The mediocre man become the sage,
> And each his brother welcome face to face ?
> Above the battle's din, beyond all wars

The stricken cries of souls in slavery
Arise ; and loud and clear the one pure cause
Of freedom and the rights of liberty :
  Grant us, O God, a brotherhood of laws,
Where men unite to serve humanity.

I will give three couplets facing the poem *Portsmouth* :—

The country is the face of God
That shines eternally ;

The river is the heart of God
That beats unceasingly ;

The ocean is the soul of God
That lives immortally.

Portsmouth is a poem over twelve pages long, so we may only have parts of it in this review. It holds a special charm for me, since it was my grandmother's home when a girl. Our Bartletts all came from the lovely old sea-port town of Portsmouth, and Lucy Bartlett was the first of that name, my grandmother :

Portsmouth is growing old,
There's no doubt about it.
Hermaphrodite city—
Last night I passed along its streets.
As I walked in the shadows
It passed me—
The Man-woman,
Yes, growing old,
There's not the slightest doubt.

Its houses, some of them,
Are falling to decay,
Its churches overgrown with moss.
And ivy, creeping parasite,
Climbs in jealous wonderment
Upon its new possessions.

* * * *

Aristocracy lives on,
A smouldering fire

Fanned on the instant
By some new scion's birth—
Aristocracy,
Tradition-weighted,
Royalty-inflated,
Ready to flame anew.

* * * *

So illusive
Is the essence
Of the fading, dying past,
Like the death of
Some choice flower
Living after
Bloom is o'er—
Still entrancing,
Ever fragrant
As the blossoms
That it bore.

* * * *

Growing old—yes,
Old in beauty,
Old in culture,
Change, decay—
The quaint old figure
In its coverings of Clay;
But its life
Is of the Spirit,
Which is young as Yesterday.

Having secured from Mr. Woodbury his favorites in his book, *Portsmouth and Other Poems*, I will try to abide by his choice, though there are so many in the book one likes it is difficult:

TERCENTENARY

Glad bells ring out: let all your guns salute;
A mighty salvo to this Gala day!
Blow, trumpets, blow—give unrestraint her way.
Luxuriant summer breathes upon her lute
And pensive Pan pipes on his forest flute.
Let Age rejoice and Youth be blitheful, gay—
The city celebrates her birth to-day;
Let rocks their silence into song transmute.

The hills with mirth and joyous laughter ring,
The river marches by on dress parade,
The heavens clap their hands and anthems sing,
The sea is in her navy blue arrayed,
The clouds scud by in ruff and high cockade—
As in the Merrie days of Martin Pring!

I will close this review with Mr. Woodbury's *Memorials:*

MEMORIALS

"This day shall be unto you for a memorial."

You honored dead who dying gave your all—
How can we build a fitting monument
How can we render just emolument?
Great deeds were yours—we bring our tributes small
And place them o'er your mounds—the swift tears fall.
Too scanty praise and little deeds are ours
Which perish like the bloom of summer flowers.
We dedicate our lives a just memorial.

The dead in endless cycles still live on.
The living still like broken blades of grass
Through life's predestined change must ever pass.
Man is his past and is forever born
Into a world of love as yet unknown,
Out of sorrow, like a rose full-blown.

A. H. B.

THE LAST GUEST

WHEN I shall hear a last low, muffled knock—
Yet stern, insistent—at my chamber door,
Oh may my hands not fumble at the lock,
But open wide to my grim visitor!
For if, however chill my heart may be,
I fail him not in hospitality,
But freely pour my wine and break my bread,
And speak him fair with calm and quiet breath,
Then those who loved me will be comforted,
Saying—"We will not grieve; she welcomed Death."

MARY SINTON LEITCH.

Lynnhaven, Virginia.

THOMAS GRAY

HE sought not here on sweeping wings to soar,
Leaving the green earth for the Milky Way;
His flight among the elms and yew trees lay,
Where his deliberate note, conned o'er and o'er,
To willing ears a tranquil message bore,—
Adding a brooding stillness to the day;
Making the pensive victor o'er the gay:
This was his mission: did he nothing more?

Yes, for he taught the lowly may be wise;
That to the cottage highest bliss may come;
And that the heart may thrill though lips be dumb:
He marshalled proudly, to our wondering gaze,
Our tattered thoughts in a sublime disguise,—
In vestures of his own immortal phrase.

JOHN HOGBEN.

LINES FOR A MODERN SPHINX

EACH time you enter, goes my heart to meet you,
Though I stand still and look quite commonplace
And, silent, long with fevered words to greet you;
While secretly I search your shadowed face . . .

To see if there's a gleam of more than kindness
Or if indifference only wins the race;
Or cruelty, another form of blindness
Hides all the mocking beauty of your face.

When will there be an answer to my pleading,
Will my eyes mate with thine a breathing space?
And drowned in deepest depths, at last be reading
Their utter satisfaction in your face?

JOAN BEVAN.

* * *

The author of "Otmoor" (p. 27) has been blind from birth; from the School for the Blind at Birmingham he obtained scholarships to the College for the Higher Education of the Blind at Worcester, and from there again to Queen's College, Oxford, where he hopes to take his finals in English Literature in June.

A MODERN SEER.*

THE varied range of Dr. Whitby's literary work has carried his name far beyond his native West Country, where he is President of the Bath Centre of The Poetry Society. His *Makers of Man*, we believe, has even been translated into Japanese; and his *Wisdom of Plotinus* recently reappeared in a new edition. In *Triumphant Vulgarity* he scathingly, but with self-control and courtesy, rebuked some of the worst faults of our age; in *The Logic of Human Character* he, as an M.D., a psychologist and a man of letters, poet and scientist, treated of ethics with combined complexity and vigour. In THE POETRY REVIEW not long ago I ventured to deplore that too many of our current poets cripple themselves by neglecting to take up their heritage of the wisdom of the ages. This, however, is the last complaint it would be possible to bring against so many-sided a writer as Charles Whitby, whose books of verse, especially *The Rising Tide*, show an intensity of human sympathy all the more remarkable from a scientific analyst who rides his emotions habitually on the curb and is master of his own heart and intellect. The haunting *Concerto in A Minor*, likely to be interesting and arresting to almost any lover of poetry, is doubly so when the reader has already studied Dr. Whitby's *Makers of Man*, a diagnosis of genius as incarnate in world-famous seers, fighters, scientists, poets and artists; a procession from the remote past, across the ages, and a stimulus to men of the future.

The *Concerto* is almost as impossible to review as if it were actually music. It cannot be conveyed vicariously through description; and to quote small portions of it is a form of mutilation unfair alike to the writer and the reader. It resembles music further in that no two readers will find it evoking precisely identical emotions, and a reviewer will be wisest not so much to pass Rhadamanthine judgment as to voice his personal feeling. It combines in an extraordinary fashion a dreamlike ecstasy with an almost startlingly distinctness of imagery; and from the opening page we are aroused, gripped and fascinated. First the poet waits "rapt and aloof," not knowing what, if any, inspiration is on the way to him.

> "Unguessed as yet the theme, albeit I hear
> elusive cadences of hope and fear:
> Song snatches, laughter full of godlike scorn,
> the distant challenge of an elfin horn,
> clashing of swords, a ravenous tiger's roar,

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* *Concerto in A Minor.* By Charles Whitby (B.A., M.D.Cantab.). With Decorations by Fred Adlington. John M. Watkins, 21, Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2. 1924. 3s. 6d.

thunder of breakers on a rockbound shore,
the tramp of armies marching forth to die,
one redbreast warbling to a wintry sky."

As he meditates, "questioning vainly my heart for the source of its yearning," and wanders alone "where cypress and cedar swart boughs intertwine," an unseen presence is felt, and "Calliope dear to Apollo" grants him to gaze at last on her mysterious beauty and hear her magical voice.

All lovers of Elizabethan poetry will remember how Spenser's Calliope in *The Tears of the Muses* bewails the poor welcome given to poets upon earth; and Dr. Whitby's Calliope also—though in a manner entirely his own—contrasts the infinite with the finite, and deplores the blindness of mortals. Then she vanishes, leaving him with a heightened sense of beauty; and, its inevitable complement, a deepened power to apprehend the ironic tragedy of mortal existence. After the gracious vision of Calliope, we go with our poet into terrible realms where "Saturn, Lord of Sorrow," lays upon him and us yet heavier burdens of enhanced power to see and suffer. The poet then goes forth on a desolate pilgrimage, and we share with him a dread and horror, a grief which seems irreparable, age-long, and overwhelming. But even as we fear lest all bright and beautiful things be fated to destruction, all noble hearts foredoomed to be broken on the wheel of a malign and relentless fate, we begin to understand this dark night of the soul as a testing of our courage and resolution. We see that the invincible spirit must toil on gallantly, unwaveringly, and thereby vindicate its claim to kinship with the immortals.

"Salute, proud heart,
The wise, the true, the brave, the strong,
the Priests of Thought, the Kings of Art,
the Lords of Life, the Gods of Song. . . .

* * *

How swiftly and smoothly towards me cleaves
her mirrored way the boat that leaves
their shore! O hearts emancipate
can it be I whom ye await?"

Thus on a joyous and triumphant note ends a poem quivering with anguish for the errors and confusions, the baffled hopes, and the seemingly intolerable sufferings which earth-life often mysteriously entails. "God is not called upon to fight for cowards," says an ancient Greek sage, dear to Dr. Whitby, and this is the key to the *Concerto in A Minor*.

E. M. TENISON.

MR. CREW INMAN'S PHILOSOPHY.

In *Of Castle Terror* (Brimmer and Co., 1924) our New England poet, Arthur Crew Inman, presents an artistic miniature reflex of the world drama that since prehistoric times has been changing economic and social conditions, and during the past ten years has changed half of the world from monarchies to republics.

In a setting, compelling, of harvest fields, 'neath potent skies in an ancestral fort-like structure, where many mullioned panes cast quivering shadows of silver on black flooring, the story of Castle Terror, or shall we say the passionate effort of humanity to reach that Utopian balance which shall eliminate inequalities, is unveiled.

A story grown old before one tells it and in each new undertaking, each phase, betraying the ravelling of all fabrics however bravely spread against the winds of Change, it brings the eternal sadness in with a sharply etched sketch of the outstanding conflicting orders of things that hold the centre of the stage when revolt and revolution are impending in the body-politic.

The Baron, the Baroness and the Vampire remind one of the principal characters of all the revolutions, and one is likely to mentally seek to reconstruct some of the fifty or so revolutions of modern times since the English Revolution of 1688, which ended in favour of William of Orange ; the Russian Revolution of 1762, which favoured Catherine II. ; the French Revolutions of 1789, 1830 and 1870, up to the most recent bloody and bloodless revolutions.

The Baroness' compromise with the Vampire, symbolic of the compromise of the autocratic rulers in accepting the representatives of the people on equal terms, leads you to philosophise that it would have been a happier lot for the Baroness if instead of the Vampire there had been an impersonal, genial, hard working Mussolini. But then *Of Castle Terror* might not be so poetically poignant.

The book abounds in unforgetable phrases, a few we will register hereto. We give the reader in Mr. Inman's own words a hint of this remarkable book.

Here are lines of the Baron : " . . . Only in this castle where I play, alone, the sadness of the universe, am I at peace. My piano all ivory and ebony ; my high-roofed room with weird and ancient tapestries telling, by candle-light, strange tales to me ; my solitude that knows no breaking, home." His Baroness replies : " . . . Your brain is lost down memory's tempting way. Awake ! "

On the following page we find the ejaculations of the mob :—

First speaker—Internationalism !
Second speaker—Sovietism !
Third speaker—Communism !
Fourth speaker—Government by ourselves—for ourselves !

Fifth speaker—The right to rule ourselves—unruled!
Sixth speaker—The right of man—as man!

On a later page the Vampire strikes the note of materialism with :—

" Soul is appendage of body ; " continuing :
(*Cajoling*) It is an eldritch life I lead.
For centuries I have watched the world—as one apart.
In its conceit it studies its development ;
progression. Blind world !
Listen : when a man holds in one hand a hundred
pieces of gold, does he grow richer
if these are slipped from one hand into the
other ? When aught is gained, some other
thing is lost. Progression ! Bah ! Life and
death ; youth and age ; poverty and wealth ;
sickness and health ; love and hate : when
toll is taken all is held in fatalistic balance.
Change : yes. But no progression ! Thru
years I have grown wise from wisdom lost.
I seek no longer to progress. Only I would make
change as easy as possible. I watch life. . . ."

And again :

" Come render your soul to me, that linked by closest ties, we may, together, study this mystic thing of laws and counter-laws which men call fate."

In the third act the Baron expressed the haunting query :

" Birth, youth, manhood, seeming of old age,
old age itself—then death, always death.
Ambition, power, failure, love, hate, desire,
poverty, wealth, despair, triumph. The whole
composite is formed ; is torn apart ; is formed
again. From whence ? to where ? Was there no
beginning ? Is there no end ? Can all this
shift of man and time and circumstance be
meaningless ? Like some sad visionment of
everlasting doom, the sadness of the uni-
verse grips at my heart, until I would play as
I have never played : play on ; for in such
expression abides forgetfulness that I am I ;
and life is life."

Fear drives mere man to many bargains and in these next words the Baroness makes her bargain with the thing of her dread, accepting it.

CABBAGE AND RAISINS.

AT one time German cooks were wont to serve a dish of cabbage stuffed with raisins; now cabbage is a vegetable we only consent to eat because we have an idea that it is wholesome, but raisins are the food of the gods, therefore the combining of these contraries was unpleasing to the palate and disturbing to the intelligence. Mr. Oliver C. de C. Ellis* has provided us with a volume of essays that remind us occasionally of that cabbage-raisin dish. Let Mr. Ellis be disarmed, for we admit that the food for the gods is present but also the cabbage. There is a serio-comic essay on the wisdom of eating meat, and another on vivi-section which is somewhat beside the mark, because no responsible surgeon-student practises this form of research without an anæsthetic being given to the object. There are some *Plain Tales* in which the story makes its way through technicalities of shipcraft that are as a foreign language to the non-ship-hand. This, no doubt, is the fault of the non-nautical reader, and Masefield and Kipling lead their public through hedges of unknown terms. (Still we remember gratefully that "Moby Dick" was a yarn of whale fishing that caused no bewilderment to the "land-lubber.") These stories and essays may be said to represent the cabbage; *Poetry and Science* and others can be appreciated as the raisins, although *Poetry and Science* suffers occasionally from that pervading scent of "greens." It deals with the old question of whether poetry can be scientific or science poetic, the whole truth being that the true poets are prophetic, and that where the scientist notes every stone of the road, the poet catches a glimpse of the goal and never so much as looks at the dusty highway. When Shakespeare wrote "I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes," he was poetically foreseeing what the scientists and mechanics are now swiftly accomplishing, and Mr. Ellis says so himself, somewhat cautiously—"It is the seeking and the knocking that is Science; it is the finding, the partial success that is Poetry." Many of his dictums are to be heartily endorsed, as, "there can be no humorous poetry," and "the basis of *everything* is rhythm; but rhythm is not the *core* of poetry any more than rhyme is."

Poetry and Artifice is packed with quotable sentences, perhaps almost too many to make easy reading; but we may devoutly hope that some modern poets will take to heart a few of Mr. Ellis's precepts. He writes with illumination when he says, "We want

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* *Poetry and Science and other Essays in Prose*, together with a Prelude, an Interlude, and an Envoy. By Oliver C. de C. Ellis. Sherratt and Hughes.

simplicity; but the simplicity not of the stone wall"—and this is good—"but of a cherub's face," which is not so good because the simplicity of something we have never seen can be only imagined simplicity. May some also be conscience-striken when they read how a man is to know "if Poetry has come to him, he will be utterly broken by the beauty of it." Alas! it often happens now that it is only the reader who is utterly broken-hearted by the sheer ugliness of the poem. On the verses *The Interlude*, THE POETRY REVIEW has already pronounced judgment, "A majestic chant royal." It is not for me to add to, or detract from, this verdict.

Poetry and Religion is difficult to speak of, it has so much that appeals directly to the religious mind, it is a fine courageous statement of belief in Christ's message, and there runs through it the amazingly beautiful thought of Sacrament in all things, a thought expressed poetically in *Envoy*. But there ever lurks a danger in admitting the personal appeal that an author's work may make; a personally biased review is useless; it can only be the echo of, "No, I don't understand pictures but I know what I like" attitude, to which we can only reply, "Well, run away and get what you like." This essay is so fine that we can but regret that the vehicle in which it is conveyed lacks every here and there a proper dignity of expression; there is a conversational and argumentative and humorous air about it; if the underlying thought could be so poetic, could not the prose have risen to meet it? But this it does not do. To quote Mr. Ellis himself, this essay should have been "put back on the lathe, again and again."

ARTHUR HOOD.

* * *

Hesitant verse-writers will be heartened by Mr. C. E. Lawrence's admission in the *Quarterly* that "Chaucer was strangely uncertain as to his gifts. Often in his verse he suggests that he has not the power to realise his vision in words. I suppose that frequently true artists feel that disappointment, that diffidence."

* * *

A meeting of the Writers' Centre, which was inaugurated at a conference at the Overseas Club on December 6th, will be held at the Margaret Morris Theatre, Chelsea, on January 17th. Mrs. Gaye and Miss Seal will act as hostesses, and after an editorial reception, discussion and tea, a short play by Miss P. F. Gaye will be presented. Any member of the Poetry Society may obtain an invitation by applying to the General Secretary.

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S LETTER.

THE following poem, *The Realist* (signed "Cleon") appears in the current number of the *Serpent*, which is the journal of the University Unions of Victoria, Manchester. For many reasons it is an ideal subject of criticism, and it is hereby "set" for our next *post mortem*.

When I can view the world through grime-smeared glasses,
Embittered by the cynic's pois'nous gall;
Seeing alone life's lowest, black morasses,
Seeing alone the sordid side of all;

When I can hide ideals from my vision,
That elevate the thoughts of noble minds,
Consign, with a superior derision,
All goodness to the sporting of the winds;

When I can tell in detail all the story
Of all the basest actions of a fool,
Why then, "mon chou," behold me in my glory!
The "realest" hero of the realist school.

On Hampstead Heath has been warmly praised in the four best criticisms, those of Honor F. Leeke, "Evan Hathaway," "Etheldreda" and Gertrude Marriage. That of "Evan Hathaway" begins:

"The poem presents two lifelike scenes which are brought briefly and picturesquely before the mind. The first is a gem in its simplicity, clear-cut and definite and intimate. Is there a legend embodied in the second?" and ends: "One reads her *New Moon* again and again, and thanks *Poetry of To-day* for bringing to light such refreshing originality."

Honor F. Leeke's criticism covers the whole ground most completely of all, however, and is as follows:

"A beautiful poem! Its imperfection seems to be that the poet has had two visions at once, and they have stuck together. Verse I. by itself is a wonderful lyric. It is slightly marred by the weakness in line 4, where the verb is unnecessary to the construction, and merely there to make a rhyme. We see and feel the glory of the frosty night. There is nothing left to be said. Then in verse II.—the cosy inn, the glow, the warmth, the highwaymen, the perfect balance of the contrast—and suddenly we are half-blinded by the flash of a new vision, but a greater one than a lyric can contain."

I am glad that Miss Wrangham's work should be so generally

admired, since it is to her that half the present premium is awarded. This is her poem :

DEFEAT.

Since dead men tell no tales we should not sing
Of our dead loves that long ago were sweet :
Lest all the years be filled with echoing
And down dim ways some unremembered feet.

So, when each end is turned to sorrowing
For love that was too laggard and too fleet :
We should not make our shame a splendid thing
The conquered do not praise their own defeat.

The other half is awarded to Miss E. M. Fayrer (Carnwath) for the speaking wistfulness which she entitles :

PRAY FOR ME.

IN your little green church that's over the hill
And away in the woods beyond the mill,
Pray for me.

In your little green church, where the waters say
Their Pater Noster night and day,
Where untamed creatures come to praise
Almighty God in diverse ways,
Where Alleluias, hour by hour,
Trill from the throats of the feathered choir,
And where the breeze, like an acolyte
Swinging the censer to left and right,
Moves in the pines until the air
Is sweet with the scent of pious prayer,
Pray for me.

But I in another Church have tryst—
The Church that was built on the Blood of Christ.
So take out love as your sacrament,
For pure were the long, glad days we spent.
And go you forth to your place in the wood,
Strong in the strength of your strange priesthood.
Call softly to the frightened hare,
Summon the red fox from his lair,
And pray for me.

All the best poems this time are sad, some bitterly sad, some—like Cyrille Wright's—savagely sad. Miss A. Doris L. Wilson does hear a thrush in the rain :

> There, as the clear notes throbbed against the sky,
> Within my heart I built a nest of stars
> Though rain lamented o'er the fallen leaves

but the four previous lines were not on this level of writing. These twain are highly commended ; and so are Mr. "D. P. L.," Miss Blanche Jones, Miss Vera Arlett and Miss Joyce Harrison. This is D. P. L.'s poem :

> PRIMAVERA : for the Picture by Botticelli.
> Spring comes on silent foot.
> Silent the bud,
> Silent are flower and leaf.
> The swelling root
> In stillness wakes.
> The trembling bird is mute.
>
> Spring hath no crown of gold,
> No crimson robe.
> The pale austerity of dawn
> Serves her to fold
> Across her breast
> So white and pure and cold.
>
> D. P. L. (*fecit*)

Commended are Edith M. Walker, Isabel C. Paxton, M. J. Field, C. G. Mortimer, Louise Dunham Goldsberry, H. R. Williamson, T. M. Brust, B. Sowerby, Florence Overton, Anne W. Gough. There are a great many things I wanted to say, but no more room this time. I may have time for them on the 17th inst.

O. C. DE C. E.

P.S.—I have had poems to read which were written on both sides of half-transparent tissue ; but never before have I had an entry written in bright red ink on heliotrope paper ! "O will ye hear me now, ye Muses Nine ?" this poem begins. "Now" should be underlined.

The usual general premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued, and six books will be awarded to the "highly commended."

Not more than *four* poems may be submitted at the same time.

Every entry must be certified as original and as not having appeared in print, and the name and address of the competitor must be attached to the MS.

If criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. and a stamped-addressed envelope must be enclosed. (If a more detailed postal criticism is desired, 5s. and a stamped-addressed envelope should be sent.)

Entries must be either typewritten or written in ink on one side of the paper only, and contributors must be members of the Poetry Society or registered postal subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW.

All MSS. submitted for premium awards should be addressed to "The Premium Editor," and should reach this office *not later than* February 1st. Entries cannot be returned, but they must remain at the disposal of the Editor (whether awarded a premium or not) until after the issue of the next number of THE POETRY REVIEW, in which the award will be published, and they may be published in THE POETRY REVIEW or elsewhere at the Editor's option. The general conditions apply to all POETRY REVIEW premium competitions, including the American contests.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VERSE CONTEST

Book prizes at the adjudicator's discretion will again be given in three classes—viz., ages under eleven, ages eleven to fifteen, and ages fifteen and seventeen. The prizes include Mrs. Meynell's *School of Poetry*, Philip Wayne's *Lyrics for Children*, Dent's *Junior Poetry Book*, *Rainbow Lanterns* by Emily Lewis, and a selection of other suitable books not exceeding one hundred volumes. Not more than two poems may be submitted by or on behalf of any competitor, and each MS. must bear the name and address of the writer, and an endorsement of authenticity by a parent or teacher, who must be a member of the Poetry Society. School teachers, however, may send in batches of poems by their pupils, and in the event of any large number being received from any particular school or teacher a special additional prize or prizes may be awarded, thus constituting a competition within the major general contest. All MSS. should be addressed to the Children's Verse Editor, POETRY REVIEW, 16, Featherstone Buildings, London, W.C.1, on or before Jan. 31st. Personal criticism of MSS. can only be given on payment of a fee of 5s. Several poems may be sent by teachers and others for a private opinion for this fee.

INDIAN POEMS: AWARDS.

THE Indian Poetry Competition announced in the July-August issue of the POETRY REVIEW, to mark the remarkable development of the Society and its journal in India, has provided us with a some most interesting contributions and a large number of rather crude MSS. that were very much better in intention than in actual expression. While we do desire to have an individual outlook and to have Indian opinions, emotions, customs, and life generally, expressed in an original and individual manner, we cannot disregard technique. The form should be equal to the content.

The adjudication thus becomes a comparatively easy matter, £10 being divided between Mrs. Elsa Kazi (Khairpur Mirs), Mr. D. G. Upson (Lahore), Mr. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya (Mangalore), and Mrs. D. F. Lynton White, of Brighton, whose poems are distinctly within the scope of the competition and equally good in form and content, picturesque and graphic in description and characteristic in emotional expression. We received curiously few poems from English contributors, and the best of them appeared to be feeble imitations of Laurence Hope's passionate Indian Lyrics. D. F. Lynton White's work is an exception, but this is easily explained by the fact that she happens to be a life-time resident in India, temporarily located in England. The remaining 10s. is divided between Miss F. M. Kelly, of Chelmsford, and Miss M. Holmes, of Bentham. Several competitors were disqualified by their poems having already been published.

We would specially mention a sheaf of MSS. received from Mr. H. M. Stewart, of Karachi, which only failed because of their lack of technique.

We hope to publish a selection of the poems in our next issue, together with a notable Ghazal from H.H. the Mir of Khairpur, supplementing those published in our January and July numbers last year, or at a later date to include them in an Indian extra as previously proposed.

THE POETRY SOCIETY IN INDIA: FORMATION OF A SIND CENTRE.

THE *Sind Observer* of November 8th reported that Mr. Kazi, District Judge, Khairpur State, Indian member on the General Council of the Poetry Society (Incorporated), and Mrs. Kazi were "At Home" on the 2nd inst. to a large gathering of State officials and others from all districts of Sind, who had been specially invited to take part in the meeting to form a Centre of the Poetry Society for Sind. His Highness Mir Ali Nawazkhan, the Ruler of Khairpur State, who is a Patron of the Society, had kindly consented to extend his patronage to this Centre. Mr. M. K. Sheikh, Vazir, Khairpur

State, being a Vice-President of the General Society, presided on this occasion.

Mr. Kazi, among other things, mentioned that the Poetry Society was formed in 1909, when he was himself there, mainly by the efforts of one gentleman, who had realised that forces of materialism and narrow nationalism could not be better counteracted than by reviving the interest of public in Poetry, and this Society now counted thousands amongst its members. . . . To encourage membership, and to keep the members informed of the modern movements of Poetry, the Society has got an organ in the well known POETRY REVIEW and had fixed the yearly subscription so low as Rs. 6, which is barely the cost of the Review supplied gratis to the members. He further stated that the understanding of Occidental poetry by Orientals, and that of the Orient by the Westerners was sure to create that mutual understanding and goodwill which the whole world to-day desires. Besides, he said, the Society had created a world-wide freemasonry, so that an Indian member of the Poetry Society would be welcomed at the meetings of the society as much in England, Australia, American and South Africa as in India.

Mr. M. K. Sheikh, the President, enthusiastically supported Mr. Kazi, and said that he was proud that the first branch of the Poetry Society in India was formed in the Khairpur State. After all those present agreed to be the members of the Society, Mr. Hafiz proposed Mr. Sheikh to be the President of the branch for the Sind Centre for the year 1925, Major Mir Ghulamali Talpur, brother of the Ruler of Khairpur State, to be a Vice-President, Mr. Mahomed Ayub Khuhro, M.L.C., to be the General Secretary and other certain persons to be the secretaries for all the districts in Sind.

* * *

A centre for the Golders Green district has been formed, and the meetings are held at 8 p.m. on the first and third Fridays of the month at The Institute (Room 11), Central Square, Hampstead Garden Suburb, N.W.11. The following programme has been arranged :—

January 2nd.—Poems on the New Year.
January 16th.—Robert Browning.
February 6th.—Members' favourite Poems.
February 20th.—Poems on the Sea.
March 6th.—Dramatic Readings.
March 20th.—Poems on Spring.

Information respecting the work of the Centre can be obtained from the Hon. Sec. (*pro tem.*), Mr. J. F. Tilly, 32, Camden Square, N.W.1.

THE BETROTHAL.

THIS poem portrays a typical betrothal of the small farmer in Sindh. When parents of both parties have agreed on marriage of their children, relations and friends (all women) from the bridegroom's side are dispatched with presents to the bride. In gay procession, bearing the gifts in baskets on their heads, the women move along, headed by three or four hired men that beat the duhals (drums) and play the shernais (pipes of high weedling note). The women enter the bride's cottage, present the gifts to her, put the betrothal ring on her finger, and pay her a good many compliments. They receive refreshments, such as sherbets iced (sweet fruit drinks) in summer, and sweetened milk in winter. The bride must not see the face of her betrothed till the hour of union, and the women indulge in praises of her future husband. They enumerate his possessions. He has pans and pots and also a cradle (an indispensable piece of furniture in the Indian home—a bedstead, fixed to two poles, like a swing, serving as cradle for young and old). He also possesses pacca land (land watered by water-wells, not by incoming river-tide as catcha land is). They dwell on his personal charms (often with great exaggeration), congratulate her on the choice, urge the wedding, and the betrothal is completed. All the time the men, who are not allowed inside, pipe and drum outside the cottage door, in harmony with the sentiments expressed in the bride's chamber.—E. K.

DUM-DUM-DUM and weedle-dee
There the bright procession see!
Men in front the Duhals bear;
Gay Shernai doth pierce the air.
Chatting women follow on . . .
Festive garments did they don;
Early did they leave their huts,
With the store of coco-nuts,
With the candy white and sweet,
Almonds fresh and raiments neat.
Presents for some pretty maid;
On their heads the treasures rest,
Cleanly there in baskets laid;
By some longing lover blest . . .
Dum-dum-dum and weedle-dee
'Tis a merry company!

* * * * *

Dum-dum-dum and weedle-dee
Women sing and clap with glee!
Children leap and laugh and hum
To the sounds of pipe and drum.
Through the country path along
To the village moves the throng;
In the humble cottage there
Women find the maiden fair;
Gently in her lap they lay
Fruits and sweets and fine array;
On her finger slim they place
Bright betrothal ring of gold;
Praise the beauty of her face
And receive the sherbet cold . . .
Dum-dum-dum and weedle-dee
'Tis a zealous embassy!

* * * * *

Dum-dum-dum and weedle-dee
Hear the melting melody!
Women tell with coaxing tones
Of the wealth the suitor owns:
"Comely cottage, pans and pots;
Cradle red and lacquered cots;
Hens and cocks the morn to tell;
Pacca land, a water-well;
Oxen strong the wheel to ply;
Many goats that milk supply;
Let there be the wedding soon . . .
With thy loving mate abide,
For his face is like the moon
And he longs to hold his bride . . .
Dum-dum-dum and weedle-dee
Happy, happy shalt thou be!"

* * * * *

ELSA KAZI.

Khairpur Mirs.
16th September, 1924.

* * *

For details of the Poe Cottage Memorial Poems Contest (200 dollars, closing date extended to March 15) see p. 341; the Foster Ballads Competition (50 dollars, January 15), 342, 1924.

An Afghan MEDITATION ON DEATH.

Ghazal by Isa Akhun Zada (Called Isa Gul—Isa the Rose).

READ in conjunction with the ghazal in Urdu, published in the January issue of The Poetry Review, and Judge Kazi's illuminating article on this exotic form, a very interesting comparison may be made. Afghani, like Persian, is written in Arabic characters, from right to left. Particular interest is lent to this poem by the fact that these Afghani forms have never been translated before, except in prose or free verse, which are inadequate and quite foreign to these highly polished and richly rhymed and metred poems. The exact form and rhyme scheme must be adhered to if the original is to be adequately reproduced in the translation.

The bulbuls have flown from the gardens of summer afar, O my heart;
Leaving the roses and almonds and fruits, in haste they depart.

This world is a garden of flowers, and men are the birds in its bowers;
And who understands the world best? The wise, or the foolish of heart?

Think! whether fakir, sage or whether a sirdar or chief, all together,
All men and all beasts from this garden of life some day must depart.

My parable is not misleading; so lend me thy ears and be heeding;
I'll explain to thee fully, O brother, the burden that weighs on my heart.

Muhammad, the Man of the Ages, God's Prophet, and wise among sages,
When his time was accomplished, he too, the Master, was forced to depart.

Altho' 'twas for him the Creator the Universe made, and then later
Seven Heavens and Seven Earths in their courses He fixed by his art.

A great King was Sultan Sikander; than Solomon no man was grander;
He sits on a heavenly throne, a prophet in wisdom of heart.

No doctor than Lokman was wiser; in remedies sagest adviser;
And yet he forgot all his craft when Death summoned him to depart.

These worthy men all, O my brother, were pious and wise as none other;
Yet left their power behind! And compared to them, poor is our art.

O men, take a time for reflection, give service to God in subjection—
Nor you nor I may remain when the signal sounds to depart.

Come, come! get ye busy preparing the long After Journey and Faring—
All is cheap in this world's bazaar—all is dear in that after mart.

Each day I make five attestations Koranic, with no alterations.
O God! may all who believe, in thy Paradise-garden have part!

Poor Isa Gul takes no more pleasure acquiring terrestrial treasure:
He thinks of the rain falling down on his town in the black dust apart.

I, Isa, chief sinner, am praying—count not all my faults overweighing
Else I'm lost! Show Thy generosity, Lord, and accept Isa's heart!

Trans. from the Afghani (Pushtu) by
MAY FOLWELL HOISINGTON.

THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF BALLADS.

LORD RONALDSHAY, in an article on "What is it Nationalist India Wants?" in the *Nineteenth Century*, refers to Dr. Chandra Sen's compilation of the ballads of Eastern Bengal in the following terms: "For centuries past there have been sung and handed down from father to son amongst the peasant population of Eastern Bengal a whole collection of ballads, the faithful record by village poets of episodes in the daily lives of the people. A number of these illuminating songs has recently been collected, edited and translated by Rai Bahadur Dinesh Chandra Sen, who has done so much to make better known to the world the literary treasures of Bengal. Among these ballads is the story of Kenaram, a famous robber chief. The interesting work is described by the editor of the collection as an historical account by one who knew them at first hand of events in Bengal during the closing quarter of the sixteenth century. It must contain, therefore, a first-hand account of the life of Bengal before the advent of the British.

"The tale which it unfolds is that of a land racked and riven by anarchy, of deserted homesteads and of a people harried and panic-stricken under a chaotic administration. 'The people buried their wealth under the earth for fear of plunder,' sings the poetess. 'The robbers strangled the wayfarers with nooses of rope:' and, with particular reference to the activities of Kenaram himself, 'the very leaves of the trees shivered as if in fright; none dared to light a lamp in the evening lest it should attract notice to the house nor

dared to come outside after dark.' . . . Nor does this historical ballad bear out the contention that famine is a product of British rule. 'At this time,' declares the poetess, 'the district of Mymensing was visited by one of the most cruel famines that had ever come upon Bengal.' And she describes its horrors in graphic detail: 'Husbands sold their wives, and wives their children. All convention, all affection and feeling were gone, and men became like lower animals seeking the whole day long for something to live upon.'"

JOSÉ'S APPEAL.

Apropos our children's verse contests, we have pleasure in printing this exquisite appeal for blind babies by a child of eight.

HAVE you ever watched the sunset with its reddish golden light,
Mauves and purples softly blending,
A dream of pure delight?
If you have, then try to picture
Total darkness—always night
Like the darling wee blind babies
Who have got no precious sight.

* * *

Have you ever chased a rabbit with your doggie at your heels,
Saying, as you ran so blithely, "What a game, how good it feels"?
If you have, just try to picture little children who must stay
In one spot until there's someone who will guide them on their way.

* * *

Have you heard the wild birds singing in the lanes at early morn,
Trilling songs of sweetest music, waking up the Queen of Dawn?
If you have, then try to picture what 'twould feel like without eyes,
Never once to see the flowers or the ever-changing skies;
Never to see the water ripple over little water sprites;
Never to see loved ones' faces. Oh! those helpless little mites
Ask you all to help them into "Sunshine" Homes where nurses kind
Try to bring some sunshine into lives of children who are blind.

JOSÉ À BECKETT.

José à Beckett, the orphan granddaughter of Mrs. Schulze of Watford, has already composed a large number of poems, some of which have been dedicated to and accepted by members of the Royal Family. A short time ago little José was congratulated by Queen Mary on gaining a Bronze Medal and Honours Certificate

for one of her poems. Critics have already spoken highly of José's literary ability. The child is also a very brilliant violinist, and has earned the commendation of the world-famous Miss Marie Hall, who predicts a great future for her. Mr. Spencer Dyke, Fellow and Professor at the R.A.M.C., is José's teacher, and she owes a great deal to his splendid training.

José is an ardent worker on behalf of the blind babies of Sunshine House, Chorley Wood, who inspired her to write an appeal on their behalf. She hopes that this appeal may move many hearts to compassion on behalf of the little helpless mites who have no eyes with which to see the sunshine and the flowers. José will gladly receive subscriptions to be forwarded on the wee blind mites' behalf. The same should be sent to José à Beckett, 37, Whippendale Road, Watford, Herts.

FLECKER ON VERSE WRITING IN EDUCATION

IN *The Grecians* (Dent) James Elroy Flecker discusses a model system of education. In his ideal public school, organised for the purpose of developing "true education," he explains, "we shall write English, not Greek or Latin, poetry, and, strange to say, we shall take these compositions more and not less seriously than the classical verse is taken now. We shall not give a prize once a year for some absurd heroics on a set theme, but we shall very diligently teach the art of verse, initiating our boys by setting them to write verse translations from poems in other tongues. Our criticism will be ruthless—we shall point out vulgarity of idea, insufficiency of thought, staleness of metaphor, harshness of sound. We shall not necessarily produce great poets by this training, but we shall certainly produce young men who love poetry, and (what is rarer still) who understand it. The artist may have an incomplete understanding of poetry; but only the artist can have a complete understanding of it."

* * *

The Marchioness of Londonderry, the Earl of Cromer, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, Lord Gorell (who will give an address on "Poetry and Modern Life" at an early date), Miss Mary Anderson, the Hon. Stephen Coleridge, Miss Lena Ashwell, Lady Cynthia Asquith, and Dr. Greville Macdonald have been elected vice-presidents of The Poetry Society (Incorporated).

For the services of Poetry Society's recognised lecturers on the significance and the appreciation of poetry, application should be made to the General Secretary. A special series of lectures for young people can be supplied to schools and colleges.

CHILDREN AND POETRY.

AT what age should children be given fine poetry to learn and classical models to study, if not to copy? The results of the last verse competition have made me think that pretty rhymes about flowers and fairies—very valuable for juniors—would, if children were given a chance, be naturally outgrown at about ten or eleven years of age. But the children should be given this chance. Boys, I believe, are earlier fed on virile poetry than are girls. As proof of this let me quote what I think is the best poem of the whole of this quarter's competition—a poem written in a difficult metre, but conceived and executed with spirit and strength. The writer is M. Mackenzie, a lad under thirteen years of age, to whom is given the first award.

RAMESES II.

IN IMITATION OF TENNYSON'S "BOADICEA."

Lo! Upon the sands of Egypt, lo, an army innumerable,
Stretches o'er the sandy reaches of the plain illimitable:
Swelled a shout o'er all the army, swelled a clamour voluptuously.
Standing in a mighty chariot, rolling, splendidly decorated,
The wheels of which made roaring thunder that the pit of Acheron shook,
He the gorgeous King of Egypt clad in robes magnificently,
Rode in all the glorious splendour of the Libyan monarchy.
Opposite there stands an army, Pharaoh's mighty adversary,
Khita, whose far empire stretches to the barbarous ends of the world.
In the midst of that great conflict Rameses is cut off from his men;
Lo! he scatters foes before him, as a winnower scattering chaff;
Down they fall in bloody masses, down they roll in ignominy.
Like the roaring sound of cataracts, like some winds amalgamating,
On he rushes fighting fiercely into the foe impetuously.
See, their chieftains, kings and warriors in their arms fall clattering down,
Rushing to the realms of Osiris, hurtling to doom inevitable,
Where the souls of all departed warriors feast reclining in rest
Like the roaring crested breaker that dashes against the towering cliff,
Back recoiling, so the warriors sway and charge and surge up around;
As the mighty God Apollo up the heaven his chariot drives,
So looked Rameses, King of Egypt, so looked Rameses beloved of Ra;
As some sole and wandering fisherman caught in the cataract's eddying tides,
So was Rameses shot at, buffeted, so remaining imperishable.
Thus resounded fitfully, ghastly, blasts of clarions sounding aloud,

Through the day and on till nightfall clearly the clamour reverberated,
Yet King Rameses overcame them, yea, he remained unconquerable :
Fled the enemy from before him, fled his foes in precipitous rout.

This admirable effort comes from the St. Clare Preparatory School, Walmer, Kent. The boys of this school seem to me to have had teaching that must have been very inspiring. Why should not all children have such teaching, such guiding towards a sound literary output ? Here is another poem from the same school, by J. B. Armstrong, aged 13.

JEANNE D'ARC

A simple lowly lass of humble birth,
    Called by the Saints to come and succour France,
    To dress in knight's steel helmet, sword and lance,
Whose parents were but tillers of the earth :
She loved her men, admiréd by her foes,
    Sent by her God to suffer and to die,
    When still the fear of instant death is nigh,
Upon the wall her banner bravely shows.
    Seized by her captors, burnéd at the stake,
    All for her country and her vision's sake,
She died a martyr for her country's good,
    And now, remembered by her fellow maids,
    Is not forgotten, though her glory fades,
Where in the market place her statue stood.

J. B. Armstrong has also written an excellent *Columbus*. Indeed, at first I gave his work the premier place. I liked the spirit of *Columbus* and the simplicity and clean-cut form of the sonnet, and I turned backwards and forwards with some uncertainty between the work of these two boys. *Rameses II* is, however, a real *tour de force*, and the very ambition of the effort is perhaps a little dazzling—but it is an admirable imitation of Tennyson's *Boadicea*, and I have been greatly interested to read it.

I am afraid that the boys have far outstripped the girls on this occasion ; but I have been glad to receive another batch from Hamilton House School, Tunbridge Wells. Here, again, one feels that the children have been encouraged to treat poetry *objectively*—not to consider that trite and rather paltry emotions become poetry when they are made to rhyme ! Rosemary Wibner takes the premier award among the elder group this time. Her work has made a big

stride since the last competition and is not marred by meaningless and careless lines.

I WONDER

I wonder—but I wonder many things,
It seems as if my errant mind had wings
And wandered far among the winds of thought—
I wonder if, when Christ was crucified,
He gave one ling'ring look before He died
About the world where He had loved and worked,
Where He'd rejoiced, where He had suffered so ;
Where He had played with babes, had watched them grow
From children to fair women and strong men.
I wonder was not suff'ring worth that prize ?
To light the Mother-love in Mary's eyes.
And what is there in God's own Heaven above
To equal just one look of Mother-love ?

Marjorie Rubeck's *Ninth Wave* is good, too, though just a little commonplace in its treatment sometimes.

It is, I think, an ability for sustained effort that one wants, above all, to see among the children ; a determination to reject puerile or merely fanciful lines, and to maintain their verse on a high level up to the end. One becomes very weary of trivial thoughts about fairies and flowers at second hand. Poor little faded blossoms I find these flowers, as a rule. Will no young writer ever bring me the real "tang" and savour of the woods ? I will give them a sample of true nature-writing—or, rather, landscape-writing—from a modest but graceful little book called *Moon and Mist*, written by May Belben, and sent to this office for review.

WHEN WORK IS DONE

In fields of buttercups
  Horses are standing,
After the long day's work,
  Peacefully resting.

After the heat and toil,
  Fresh grass and cooling ;
Under the thick green trees
  Quiet of evening.

Green grass and buttercups,
Brown horses standing;
Drooping the branches low,
Shade, rest refreshing.

Now that is very simple—so simple that people who had not been charmed by exactly the same beautiful picture of tired horses standing under the trees in the evening coolness might not perceive anything in it. Yet, for those who, *have* been so charmed, everything is repictured. And that is the quality which makes poetry real. This little book, by the way, has a delightful preface by Miss J. Nankivell, whose admirable article on *Poetry for Children* will be remembered by readers of this Review.

There are not many prizes awarded this quarter to the children; for, frankly, I do not find that many of the verses sent in deserve awards. Several secondary schools have sent large batches. What do the teachers in these schools give the children for models? Poor stuff, I'm afraid. An obvious lesson is to be learnt, I think. Let the mere "prettiness" and jingles of the innumerable Christmas books on the market be kept to the nursery, and give the older children finer work to study. Be it understood that much of this "nursery" writing is very charming, and absolutely suited to "the littlest ones of all." But it is not suited for schools; for which, moreover, many admirable anthologies have recently been compiled. The children from the County School at Annanford seem, as before, to have been encouraged to read good poetry. Doris Limed Griffith sends in a poem which is again above the average; and is commended for it. This little girl of thirteen has a real touch of lyricism and a feeling for the form and colour of things.

From Rutherford College Girls' School, Newcastle-on-Tyne, comes some quite respectable verse. Ismay Goldie sends *The Burn* —two of the lines use name-places attractively:—

"Swirling thro' the granite corry,
Gairlie's glen and down by Torry."

She should try to send in something that is fresh and vigorous throughout. Her *Sister Sweet*, too, has a real touch of poetic imagination. She is awarded a second prize, and is placed in the eleven to fifteen class, as *The Burn* was written when she was fourteen. But I hope that all these children will compare their work with the verses printed at the beginning of this article, produced by boys younger than themselves.

From among the children under eleven I have chosen for a second prize a funny little poem written by Brenda Dowling (9 years old), sent from Halidon House School, Slough. No first prize is awarded. The poems of the younger children are not so good as they were last time. I have, too, quite a number of verses from a boys' school about football which are more remarkable for vigour than for rhythm or expression! Yet, in the last competition, a girl sent in quite a respectable effort in this direction.

Here is quite a good poem by Usla Skimming (age 16), The Lodge, Banstead, Surrey :—

THE CITIES

Atlantis now is but a name,
Sybaris is long since gone,
Nineveh is lost to fame
With many-gardened Babylon.
Syracuse in ruins is ;
Carthage is beneath the plough.
Memphis and Persepolis,
Where are all these cities now ?

Sinuous seaweeds wave in Tyre,
Beneath green waves her houses drown ;
Sidon felt the conqueror's fire,
Ilium's windy keep is down.
Sardis knows not the wind's kiss,
Dust is over Susa's brow ;
Tanis, Megalopolis,
Where are all these cities now ?

She is bracketed for a first award with Rosemary Wibner, in the elder children class. Edith Natalia Hoisington, too, sends in a couple of her charming "verse-patterns," but is debarred this time from an award.

I find the fourth volume of *Public School Verse* most interesting, when compared with the work of our own competitions. It contains one or two truly admirable poems. I hope all the competitors in this quarter's contest will read the following lines, contributed by Gabriel Toyne, of Oundle School. They have a flavour of Walt Whitman ; but they might well be taken to heart by all young aspirants to the beautiful art of verse.

INSPIRATION OF POETRY

I am the sky and the wind
And a laugh in the darkness,
I am the song of the seas
And the foam of a mill-race ;
Flight of innumerable stars,
The dawning of sun in the desert ;
Breaking of souls in despair,
And all loss of desire.
I am the maker of kings,
The enslaver of souls and their saviour ;
I am the shaper of beauty,
The moulder of cripples in sorrow,
Toll of insatiable death. . . .

I am the blossoming flower,
The closer of pale chiselled petals ;
I am the smoke of burnt pines, . . .
The sweep of a swan skyward winging.
I am dynamic, the urge,
The Will full of interest in all things,
The great undeniable call,
The undying Soul of the Singer.

Those lines, whatever their faults, have inspiration and loftiness. Any young writer who reads them should have his poetic aims made higher and his horizon expanded. A little book far removed in atmosphere from the above quotation is *Through the Green Door*, by Anne Macdonald (Basil Blackwell). It would make a nice Christmas gift for a child of eight years old or thereabouts, and the illustrations are very charming.

AWARDS.

Ages Fifteen and Sixteen.—Premier awards : Rosemary Wibner, Hamilton House School, Tunbridge Wells. Usla Skimming, The Lodge, Banstead, Surrey.

Ages Eleven to Fifteen.—Premier award : M. Mackenzie, St. Clare Preparatory School, Walmer, Kent. Second award : J. B. Armstrong (same school). N.B.—The work of these two boys will readily be seen to be superior to that of the older class. Second award : Ismay Goldie, Rutherford College Girls' School, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Children under Eleven.—Second award : Brenda Dowling, Halidon House School, Slough.

BLANCHE WINDER.

A VERSE WRITERS' CIRCLE.

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

THREE years ago I attended a meeting of the "Salon des Poètes" in Paris, at the "Grand Palais," the home of "the Salon," Exhibition of Pictures. To my delight I found many young people—including young actors and actresses from the "Odéon" and "Comédie Française"—recited their own poems or those of other poets; while poets of maturer years, or lovers of poetry, did the same. It was a very interesting experience, and I hope to repeat it.

The "Salon des Poètes" is organised by the "Société des Poètes Français," and the president is M. Sebastien Charles Leconte, and the secrétaire général is M. Edmond Teulet; address, 46, Rue de Marais, Paris.

I agree that it would be a very good thing if a similar "Salon" or Circle were established in London. I suggest that this should be in connection with the Royal Academy at Burlington House. It would then help to bring the fact home to people that Art includes fine literature (and drama) as well as painting, sculpture, and architecture, regarded as "the Cinderella" of the Arts, which explains *why* so many ugly or commonplace houses and cottages are now "going up," and spoiling the beautiful country-side of England.

Art is the *expression* of the spirit, mind and soul of man—and, if not, it is "a thing of nought."

London, W. M. DALE.

[It is proposed that a special circle be formed of the verse writing members of the Poetry Society, particularly the contributors to THE POETRY REVIEW and the quarterly supplement, *Poetry of To-day*. Conferences and social meetings would be held occasionally for the discussion of the art of poetry, and especially its significance in opposition to the "art for art's sake" theories. Any definite arrangements made before going to press will be announced elsewhere in this issue.—ED.]

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To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

SIR,—MIS. Hunt Bartlett's review on *Japanese Poetry*, by Mr. Page, is full of interest, but one or two statements therein do not quite correspond with those made by Mr. Arthur Waley in his book, *Japanese Poetry*. Mr. Page says that the long poem, the *naga-uta*, is usually the length of an English sonnet, therefore this possibly implies that it is still in use; whereas Mr. Waley tells us that the Japanese quickly realised that they had no genius for ex-

tended compositions, and that after the eighth century the "long-song," *naga-uta*, practically disappeared. He found only three "long-songs" that seem to him worth including.

Almost all Japanese poems are of five lines; the first and third lines contain five syllables, the rest seven. This form is called the *tanka*.

The verses Mrs. Bartlett quotes are charming, and, in their way, are perfect little translations; but they are *English* with just enough atmosphere and topical allusion to tell us that they are from Japan.

Mr. Waley follows the original more closely, and his renderings are almost literal. They remain Japanese, and students would be able easily to recognise in time each poet's individual style. I would like to quote one:—

High mountains and
The sea indeed—
(The one) goes on being a mountain
(Always) just as solid;
The other goes on being the sea
And will never be anything else.
But man
Is a flower-like thing—
Man of this fleeting world.

(MISS) GERTRUDE M. MARRIAGE.

London, S.W.5.

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From our American Editor's Cutting Book we find that not only is THE POETRY REVIEW referred to by newspapers throughout the whole length and breadth of the American Continent, but numbers of our poems are evidently syndicated in the United States, being reprinted time after time. Among the most recent to be thus taken from THE POETRY REVIEW, happily with due acknowledgment, are *Autumn Joys*, by Margaret Ormiston (*Poughkeepsie Star*, *Kansas City Journal*, *Little Falls Times*); *Night Trains*, by B. M. Powell (*Boston Herald*, *New York Tribune*, *Lewiston Journal*); *The Captive*, by Elizabeth Fleming (*New York Tribune*, *Johnson City Chronicle*, *Providence Bulletin*, *Providence Journal*); *Fir Branches Dark Across the Moon*, by Agnes Mary Lawrence (*Johnson City Chronicle*, *New York Tribune*, *Current Opinion*); *Bees*, by Margaret M. Radford (*Christian Science Monitor*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Poughkeepsie Star*), and *A Song of Glamorgan*, by Lewis Davies (*Philadelphia Inquirer*).

BYRON

1824–1924

In Grateful Appreciation of the Honour Done to An English Poet by the University of Athens and the Greek Nation.—The Poetry Society (Incorporated), London, April 19th, 1924.

THIS inscription appears on a beautiful miniature obelisk of gray Aberdeen granite, which has been accepted by the National University of Greece for its aula in Athens to commemorate the Byron centenary celebrations. At a "private view" at 350, Oxford Street, London, W., where the memorial has been displayed in the windows of this prominent bookshop, Mr. John Drinkwater read very finely the sonnets he wrote for the centenary celebrations and read at Athens on April 16th, when honorary degrees were conferred on the British representatives. Mr. Drinkwater also gave some vivid impressions of the celebrations in Greece. In the course of an appropriate and effective speech he complimented the Poetry Society on its action in presenting to the University in Athens that tangible recognition of the kindness which they showed to the English guests of the Greek Government on the occasion of the Byron centenary celebrations in April last. It was an admirable thing, he said, to show in an official and formal way, by such celebrations, their appreciation of great artists and distinguished men. A nation thus marked its national sense of obligation to its men of genius. There was evinced in Greece in connection with the Byron celebrations an emotion such as probably none of them had ever experienced in such a relationship. The only kind of emotion like it that he had come across in connection with a great poet was the Scottish national emotion about Burns.

Burns was a really national poet in the sense that he was one that all the people cared about, from the railway porter to the University professor. He was the crystallisation of something fine in Scottish character. That was a rare thing in any country. While each country acknowledged and was proud of its great poets, it was not often that a poet was an essential part of the lives of the people. Of nobody in England, not even of Shakespeare, could it be said. They had it to a certain extent in America in the case of Lincoln, who was to Americans much the same what Burns was to every Scotsman. He was a living fact.

Oddly enough, Byron had exactly this same power over the Greek people. They all knew that the Greeks paid lip service to Byron, and that certain things had at intervals been done to acknowledge Byron's service to Greece, but no one in England knew till this year how actively alive Byron was in the minds of the Greek people.

The visit of the English representatives to Greece was a remarkable and entirely unforgettable experience. Throughout the journey from Athens to Missolonghi the whole town turned up cheering Byron wherever the train stopped. No amount of stage management could have produced such demonstrations. It was a natural expression of national sentiment. In Missolonghi itself they found the same enthusiasm, though in many ways even more striking. There was no more romantic story in international history than that of the friendship between Greece and England. The central figure in that story was Byron. (Cheers.)

The Greek Minister (M. Demetrius Caclamanos) expressed his pleasure at being present. The gift from the Poetry Society to the University of Athens would, he said, be much appreciated. The material of which the obelisk was made was a symbol of the sentimental, intellectual and political aspects of Anglo-Greek friendship. (Cheers.)

MANCHESTER CENTRE NOTES.

The most important event of the first half of the session was the visit of Dr. Hulbert to Manchester, for the purpose of examining candidates in the Art of Reading and Speaking Verse; and we are much indebted to Miss Norah Allman for work done in this connection. The evening address, to members and candidates, under the title of "The Application of Eurhythmics to Artistic Ends," was rather in the nature of an intimate talk than a formal lecture, and was much appreciated. Dr. Hulbert spoke of the English language, its mixed origin, the value of its vowel sounds, and its possibilities for musical speech; and dealt with the relative importance of voice, expression, and gesture. Those sensitive to the charm of a voice, naturally beautiful, rising and falling in rythmic response to emotions "governed and controlled by a well-trained will," enjoyed, on that occasion, an æsthetic pleasure too rarely experienced. Dr. Hulbert's lecture, in its delivery, was more valuable, as a lesson, than a library full of text-books on elocution.

In the preceding lecture (November 21st) Mr. Robert Bateman spoke on "The Ethics of G. F. Watts," and concentrated the thoughts of his audience on four works by the great artist, proving, very conclusively, that Watts was a teacher of the highest thoughts and therefore akin to the true poets. The works chosen to support this conclusion were the masterpiece *Love and Death*, *Love and Life* (very beautifully and poetically interpreted by the lecturer), *Mammon*, and *Time, Death, and Judgment.*

On "Members' Night" original poems and essays were con-

tributed by Dr. Oliver C. de C. Ellis, Miss Marjorie Crosbie, Mr. A. J. Coppock, Miss Annie L. Knowles and others. The poems of Dr. Ellis were selected from his recently published volume *Samson Adami and Other Essays in Verse*; Miss Crosbie's paper dealt with "The Poetry of Birds" and included an original poem. Mr. Coppock contributed an essay entitled "The Age of Darkness." Miss Knowles took for her subject "The Fellowship of Poetry."

On December 12th a scholarly lecture on "John Donne" was delivered by Rev. B. Pollard, M.Sc.

Lectures arranged for January-February, 1925, are as follows:—

January 9th (Houldsworth Hall, Deansgate), 7.30 p.m., "James Stephens, author of *The Crock of Gold*, etc.," by Mr. J. Compton, M.A.

January 22nd (Lime Grove), 5.30 p.m., "The Art of Novel Reading," by Prof. H. B. Chorlton, M.A.

February 6th (Houldsworth Hall), 7.30 p.m., "Poetry and Flowers," by Mr. A. S. Lilley.

February 19th (Lime Grove), 5.30 p.m., "Some Modern Poets (the Sitwells, the Housmans, W. H. Davies, and Robert Bridges)," by Dr. Oliver C. de C. Ellis.

* * *

We commence the week and the year on January 5th with a "reading" of poems of Joy at the Savoy Chapel by Mr. H. B. Loren Knox, whose exhaustive survey of the arts in relation to life at a recent Kensington meeting will be remembered by all who heard him. On the following Monday afternoon Dr. Greville MacDonald will supplement the George MacDonald Centenary meeting by speaking on the work of his famous father, the beloved and mystical poet and novelist. The Centenary meeting on December 10th was a wonderful gathering and we are sure this arrangement on behalf of the Poetry Society will be appreciated and the appropriateness as one of the Savoy Chapel series will be recognised. Dr. MacDonald will provide a small exhibition of his father's MSS, first editions and portraits in the vestry.

On succeeding Mondays our "readers" will be Captain J. B. Storrs (brother of the Governor of Jerusalem), who will deal with Sonnets; Dr. Kirtland ("Beowulf"), Col. Arthur Lynch (Burns), Mr. Ashton Jonson ("John Masefield"), Mr. Lewis Hind, and Miss Dorothy Winckley, who will repeat her "Francis Thompson" recital which was found so impressive and full of charm at the Mortimer Hall recently. The poet of Winckley Street could have no more sympathetic interpreter than Miss Winckley of Winckley

Square, Preston, and now a silver medallist of the Poetry Society working in London.

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The following programme has been arranged by the Hampstead Centre :—

January 6th.—Miscellaneous Poems.

January 20th.—Charles I and Cavalier Poets.

February 3rd.—Annual Business Meeting, followed by reading of Humorous Poems.

February 17.—George MacDonald.

March 3rd.—Winds.

The meetings are held at Miss Julie Huntsman's Studios, 150, Finchley Road, N.W.3, at 7.45 p.m. An invitation to join the Centre is extended to all who take an interest in poetry.

As announced above, the annual business meeting will be held on February 3rd, when the accounts, Treasurer's and Secretary's reports for the past year will be submitted for approval, the Council elected and delegates to the annual general business meeting of the Society appointed, and for any other business which may be necessary. Nominations for the Council and resolutions for submission to the annual meeting should be sent to the Hon. Secretary not later than January 17th. Further information respecting the work of the Centre can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. F. Tilly, 32, Camden Square, N.W.1.

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The Highgate Centre will resume meetings on January 19th. The following programme has been arranged :—

January 19th.—Ballads and Legends.

February 2nd.—" Laurence Housman," Miss Bodkin.

February 16th.—Sea Songs and Nonsense Rhymes.

March 2nd.—R. L. Stevenson and W. E. Henley.

The meetings are held at Southwood Lodge, 52, Southwood Lane, N.6, at 8 p.m. Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Bowman, 10, Stanhope Road, N.6, who will be glad to enrol new members of the Society.

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The Kensington Centre meetings are as follows :—

January 15th—Miss Cory : " The Mystic in Modern Poetry," 13, Argyll Road ; 29th—Mr. Thomas Wright, John Payne, 24, Ladbroke Road. February 12th—Col. Arthur Lynch : " The Artist in the Poet," Mrs. Urwick; 26th—Dr. Kirtland : " Pearl," 5, Roland Houses. March 12th—Miss G. M. Watt : " D'Annunzio," 4, Cranley Place; 26th — Mrs. Lambert Lack, and Miss Rind, 9, Melbury Road, W.14.